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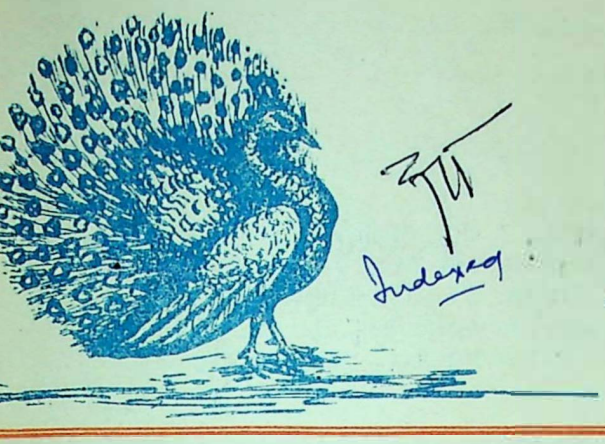

MAYURA

Newsletter of the Bird Watchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh

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For contributing articles to MAYURA and membership of the BSAP, please address; Siraj A. Taher, Hon.Secretary, Bird-watchers Society of Andhra Pradesh, 6-3-249/3, Road No.1, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad - 500 034.

EDITORIAL:-

The MAYURA is now in its' fourth volume. The first three volumes were compiled, edited and distributed by Dr. S. Tej Kumar, the founder Convenor of the Birdwatcher's Club of Andhra Pradesh. Dr. Tej Kumar was transfered on promotion, last year, from the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University, where he taught entymology, to Bapatla.

Perhaps this is the appropriate moment to spell out our editorial policies once again. Until very recently, ornithology was the domain of the studious scientist who inquired into the various aspects of a bird's life and its relationship with the environment. Gradually, this select circle began to increase as people realised that this study could be made into an absorbing hobby - birdwatching. The tremendous joy which one experiences through the vibrant soul of a little feathered bundle is hard to describe. One has to go out and experience it. No wonder this hobby has come to stay and, the list of its admirers is increasing daily. As every aspect of a bird's life is interesting - brimming with drama - the more we observe them, we learn how little one knows. And the fact that the movement of birdwatching is a young hobby in India is strengthened by the paucity of avian literature from many areas in the country. Writings on the ornithology of this area can be counted on the primary tips of one wing! The main aim of MAYURA therefore, is to try and build up a forum for birdwatchers, so that more contributions "on the ornithology of Andhra Pradesh", are made.

Starting with this issue, we include three new sections, one devoted to miscellaneous notes on the avifauna of this state and another which will contain news about the society (see Notes and News) and of general interest from the world of birds. We invite letters from our readers regarding their views about this newsletter and its contents. These will be printed in a third section called 'Comment'. Now and then, when it is felt necessary, we propose to publish a supplement to MAYURA, which will be a part of the volume in print, at that time.

- AASHEESH PITTIE.

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Edited for Birdwatchers Society of Andhra Pradesh by Aasheesh Pittie.

SURVEY OF THE BIRDS OF ANDHRA PRADESH - VIII

By: Pushp Kumar

EAGLES AND THEIR ALLIES:- Eagles are the birds of prey supreme. In size the largest of the Raptores (next only to the Vultures), they are symbols of nations' (eg. Bald Eagle of the U.S.A.), they are depicted in mythology and tradition as symbols of courage and majesty associated with royalty. Things of beauty as they sail on broad out-stretched wings above all the other birds, man is their only enemy alas!

The true eagles belong to the genus Aquila and like all royalty have other species closely related to them but of a lesser bearing: of these are the Hawk-Eagles, fishing Eagles, Sea Eagles etc., showing adaptations to the habitat and habits. The Hand Book and the Synopsis as well as other authorities list the Hawk-Eagles earlier to the true Eagles, stressing perhaps the linkage between the true Hawks and the Eagles.

HAWK-EAGLES:- The Hawk-Eagles that are reported from the Sub-Continent are 8 as per the Hand Book. However, the Synopsis lists only 7. The changeable Hawk-Eagle and the Indian Crested Hawk-Eagle are considered to be the same sub-species in different phases. Hawk-Eagles generally have an occipital crest of a few long black feathers, and like the true eagles they also have their tarsi feathered down to the toes, reminiscent of the off-white Chudidar Pyjamas worn by the Nawabs of old! These two field characteristics together make them easy to identify in the field. Hawk-Eagles are also smaller, slendered with a longer square cut tail (as Opposed to the Eagles which have shorter and rounder-ended tails).

Hawk-Eagles are also considered sporting birds (like falcons) and of late have attracted the attention of the Shaiks of the Gulf countries! But the Shaiks are not the only threat to these magnificent birds. Pesticides and the destruction of tall trees in the country side have also taken toll of these magnificent birds of prey that occupy the top niche in their part of the web of nature.

CHANGEABLE HAWK-EAGLE:- Spizaetus (Cirrhatus) limnaeetus (Horsfield)

Telugu: Salawa (?) Urdu: Sadal, Baaz

Winter visitor. This handsome buff breasted bird has been seen throughout the state in forest areas during winter months. The buff head and whitish breast with faint brown streaks makes it distinctive. One bird sitting quietly over an over-hanging Jamun branch on the Jeedivagu in Eturnagaram Sanctuary was followed along the stream bed for a mile. It would fly ahead to another branch on the stream and look back as we trudged up. When 50 yards away it would call plaintively and fly on to another branch just a few yards away and so on for a mile! Another bird was observed in the Dharavagu valley of the Nannanur Plateau in Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Sanctuary perched on a Albizizia tree this time along a dry stream bed. It has also been observed in the Thirumala hills sailing gracefully off the heights. One bird was also brought to the another in the Nehru

Zoological Park. It was kept in the Nehru Zoological Park along side the Bonellis Hawk Eagle and Booted Hawk Eagle. The bird (sex not known) was kept in its aviary for quite a long time. During this period a crested Hawk-Eagle was also kept. All the four were distinctly different. There were also no prominent bands in the tail. However, the Synopsis now clubs this with the Indian Crested Hawk-Eagle! (see below)

INDIAN CRESTED HAWK EAGLE:- Spizaetus cirrhatus cirrhatus (Gm.

Telugu: Juttu Bhyri, Namlipuri Godda Urdu: Shah Baaz

Resident. Reported from Eastern Ghats, Nallamalais and the forests of the Godavari valley. This handsome brown and white bird with a prominent "Juttu" is a forest bird frequenting streams and water courses. One bird observed in the Bird Sanctuary area of Nehru Zoological Park for years together perching on the over-hanging branches of Babul trees along the singosh tank bund, sometimes descending to the waters' edge to drink warily and swiftly flying off to another perch to the consternation of crows and white headed babblers. As it settled down the upraised crest feathers would be flattened. Was it the same bird? Another bird observed along the Bhairavpur stream in the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Sanctuary sitting upright, watching the approach of a party of Central Crocodile Breeding and Management Training Institute trainees and, with a shrill cry flying off into the forest canopy!

BONELLI'S OR SLENDER HAWK-EAGLE:- Hieraaetus fasciatus fasciatus (Vieillot)

Telugu: Kundeli Salawa Urdu: Hini, Morangi

Resident. Ranges throughout the state in forest as well as open lands but never commonly. By far the most handsome of the raptores, it is prized by sportsman for its upright and noble bearing with its peculiar tear drop like streaks on a silvery white breast. A number of specimens were brought to the Nehru Zoological Park throughout the years from 1964 onwards. All caught in the areas around Hyderabad City. For such a handsome fearless bird the method of capture appeared very simple. A pigeon or quail is tied to a stake around which a net is spread in an open grassy patch. Bird swoops on the prey and get enmerged in the snares of the net! Often seen in the Nehru Zoological Park soaring in the sky, or sitting on the railings on the Mir Alam tank Bund. The white undersides, blackish wing tips and greyish square cut tail with a black sub-terminal band diagnostic in overhead flight. One Juvenile brought to Nehru Zoological Park in 1981 was all brown in colour, which by 1982 summer turned to white underparts. At present the silvery breast and abdomen with the tear drop like streaks can be seen in the specimen now housed in the Nehru Zoological Park. This was also caught around the City.

BOOTED HAWK-EAGLE:- Hieraaetus pennatus (Gmelin)

Telugu: Udtal Godda Urdu: Juniz, Gilehri

Winter visitor. Ranges throughout the state in forested areas but never common. The telugu names for Bonelli's Hawk-Eagle

and Booted Hawk-Eagle give a clue to the size of the birds. Former capable of disproving a rabbit (hence larger) than the latter which is believed capable of only a squirrel (hence smaller)! Difficult to spot in the field. One live specimen was brought to Nehru Zoological Park in 1966-67 and was housed next to the Bonelli's Hawk-Eagle. The comparatively smaller size was evident. The specimen belonged to the white phase and not the dark phase and looked quite like the Bonelli's Hawk-Eagle to the consternation of the keepers who thought the boss had made a mistake! However, the distinctive marking and the smaller size (relatively) were quite apparently much to relief of the staff when both were placed in adjacent aviaries! This specimen was also caught in the vicinity of Hyderabad City, by the same method. However, thereafter not many specimens of this species were received.

EAGLES:- The true eagles are grouped in the genus Aquila, large and powerful raptores with a strong curved bill, powerful talleus with sharp claws, and tarsi feathered to the toes. Of the six found in the sub-continent 4 are reported from Andhra Pradesh. Sight reports of imperial Eagle (Aquila heliaca) also made but require confirmation.

TAWNY EAGLE:- Aquila rapax vindhiana)(Franklin)

Telugu: Alawa, Salawa, Urdu: Okaab

Resident. Often seen in the company of Pariah Kites, like which it looks superficially. Seen also alongwith them at Municipal Slaughter House and the recently formed refuse dump behind the Vanasthali, alongwith an assortment of vultures, Pariah Kites, Crows etc. Perched on the fence posts. Also found throughout the state in similar situations. In overhead flight the tawny body, rounded tail and light head looks very much like the Imperial Eagle of which there are no confirmed records. To add to the confusion it is considered by some authorities to be conspecific with the Steppe Eagle (q.v) which some phases it resembles.

EASTERN STEPPE EAGLE:- Aquila rapax nipalensis Hodgson

Telugu: None recorded, Salawa (?) Urdu: Tumria

Winter visitor. Confusingly like the Tawny Eagle in its different phases. No clear records of this Eagle available for Andhra Pradesh except sightings which in view of the foregoing require further confirmation.

GREATER SPOTTED EAGLE:- Aquila clanga Pallas

Telugu: Nalla Gadda Urdu: Kaljanga

Winter visitor. Occasional. A dark eagle with a whitish patch at the base of the tale. Observed in various parts of the State near Manjira Barrage recently, with BSAP. Once on the outskirts of Warangal near the Vaddepalli tank in cotton fields

as it swooped (for hares?) and rose banking with dark outstretched wings, broad rounded tail with the white crescent patch on the rump, an unmistakable sign of this bird! In a few minutes even as it was watched it rose rapidly and spiraling, soon became a dark speck in the azure sky! It was also the same species seen in December,1982, soaring over Koller, flushing open bill(in their thousands), Jacanas (Pheasant tailed in eclipse plumage) and a host of sandpipers, Golden plovers, Little and Median Egrets, clouds of Garganeys, brades of Spotbills, Pintails infact the entire lake as it was!

LESSER SPOTTED EAGLE:- Aquila pomarina hastata (Lesson)

Telugu: Chinna Nalla Gadda (?) Urdu: Pahadi Ekoa

Resident (?) Forested areas in the state. Often seen (Winter usually) in the Mannanur Plateau and Farhabad Plateau of Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Sanctuary skimming the tree tops as it were in Dharavagu area and once off the Nilgiri viewpoint spectacular escarpment, sailing, banking swooping over the tree canopy a 500 feet below! The Hand Book does not mention this bird as occuring south of M.P. It cautions that records unsupported by actual specimens in hand must be treated with caution. However this is true of all Eagles.

BLACK EAGLE:- Ictinaetus malayeusis perniger (Hodgson)

Telugu: Adavi Nalla Gedda Urdu: Okaab (?)

An aptly named handsome Eagle. Resident. Mostly a forest species, found in the moister locals. Often seen in the Eastern Ghats once near Maredumilli. Also recorded by Humayun Abdul Ali in Vizag Ghats. Seen a number of times in the Mannanur and Farhabad Plateaus of the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Sanctuary. The dark almost black plumage with yellow cere and bright yellow feet conspicuous especially as the Eagle flies away and down from the observer from a height and turning its head from side to side to keep a watch (on him?) Once also seen flying dextrously through the semi-evergreen canopy near Pullaipalli in the same Sanctuary. In flight absence of white rump patch conspicuous and sets it apart from the above two species.

WHITE BELLIED SEA EAGLE:- Haliaeetus leucogaster (Gmelin)

Telugu: Ala Gadda Urdu: Kohassa (?)

This beautiful grey and white Eagle is a resident along the entire sea coast of Andhra Pradesh. But never common. Solitary birds or pairs seen flying over the shore near the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Vizag, seen regularly. One pair was observed in December,1981 on the Mudsar Vola lake about 10 Kms. inland. One bird was perched on a Borassus palm (on a nest?) and the other near the shore line of the lake, but on a sandy bank. On being disturbed by some graziers, they rose heavily, but once airborne circled gracefully over the lake and over the Simhachalam Hill (1000') and were lost to view. Often seen perched on rocks and dry pandances branches or stone pillars along the shore, their white bellies and greying b[illegible]

very prominent. Also seen on the sea coast off Srihari Kota Island which has become a veritable Sanctuary for birds due to setting up of the SHAR Space Station. Reports of its occurrence along the coast quite frequent.

WHITE-TAILED OR PALLA'S FISHING EAGLE:- Haliaeetus leucoryphus (Pallas)

Telugu: Chepa Gedda (?) Urdu: Dhonk, Patras

An uncommon species. Reports from Srikakulam District. Only one specimen seen near the Barva Marsh in Srikakulam District in 1974-75. Thereafter no reports. However its occurance on a wider range deserves further investigation.

GREYHEADED FISHING EAGLE:- Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus (Horsfield)

Telugu: Chepa Gedda Urdu: (?) Madhuya

Resident. This brown greyheaded bird with a black terminalband on a white tail is seen more widely than the former but never commonly. Specimens seen perched on the dry tree stumps left in the upper reaches of the Nagarjunasagar. Once noted over Medak district and another time along the Coringa creek in the Coringa Sanctuary in the mangrove of the Godavari Delta. Also observed on the stakes put in the shallow waters of the Pulicat lake waiting patiently unlike the restless Brahminy Kites and the Gulls for the morsel that may surface. Its distribution must be wider—requires further investigation.

While it seems wise to let Nature taker her course with her long term fluctuations, and to adjust to her instead of trying to manage her, the short-term changes induced by man have often to be dealt with by conservation measures. It is ecological studies which will have to make clear why, for instance, changes in the habitat can be fatal to some species, or why the regional extinction (or its opposite, a population explosion) of one species may have far-reaching, often disastrous consequences for others, or even for the primary plant cover.

- Dr. Niko Tinbergen.

A VISIT TO PULICAT AND NELLAPATTU LAKES:

By: Siraj A. Taher, 6-3-249/3, Road No.1, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-34

DATE: 3rd January 1983 - Pulicat - TIME: 0630 Hours to 1800 Hours.

4th January 1983 - Nellapattu - TIME: 0600 Hours to 1330 Hours.

LOCATION: Pulicat is situated about 60 kms.north of Madras city on the extreme south-eastern coast of Andhra Pradesh and borders Tamil Nadu State. Approachable either from Madras or Gudur by a slow train or bus which stops at Tada, from where one must proceed to the village of Pudukuppam. Here, if required a boat can be arranged to traverse the waters and visit the islands in the lagoon. Alternately, we can proceed by foot or car on the road to Sriharikota Rocket Station and also along the shores of the lagoon.

Nellapattu is about 20 kms. north of Pulicat. Taking a slow train from either Gudur or Madras, we must detrain at a small station of Doraivarchatram. The lake is about 1-2 kms. from the station towards the east.

WEATHER: (Pulicat) Cool and bright. Partially cloudy in the morning. Breeze, early in the morning and again later in the afternoon. Clear skies later during the day. Slightly sultry and warm in the afternoon.

(Nellapattu) Almost the same as at Pulicat on 3.1.83, but less breezy. Cool during the day and less humid than at Pulicat.

HABITAT: (Pulicat) A huge brakish (salt) water lagoon in the Bay of Bengal. Heavy scrubland on the approaches. Light scrub on the islands. Fields and trees on the approach to the lagoon; barren near the shore. Shallow waters. A few islands scattered here and there. Shell collection in quicksand wells reportedly goes on throughout the year.

(Nellapattu) A freshwater lake with several trees in the lake itself. Water is used for irrigation purposes. Fields nearby and also trees and scrub. Water level seemed to be low from the water marks on the trees and also as told by some villagers.

BIRDS SIGHTED: (At Pulicat).

1. Grey (Spottedbilled) Pelicans - 27 nos.
2. Little Cormorant.
3. Darter or Snake Bird - feeding by diving under the water - then seen flying to the shore and spreading its wings to dry.
4. Pond Herons - several everywhere
5. Cattle Egrets

6. Large Egrets.
7. Little Egrets.
8. Reef Herons - 5 to 6 birds. One bird very different - very dark grey. Others light grey or ashy.
9. Painted Storks - 16 nos. standing near the shore and feeding.
10. White Ibis - feeding near the Painted Storks.
11. Greater Flamingoes - 100s - birds feeding - some smaller birds also seen. General overall plumage of the smaller bird - greyish. Could be young ones ??
12. Flamingoes - much smaller and thinner - more pinkish plumage - blackish/dark grey beak - Lesser ??

Thirteen birds seen in the nearer group of the Greater Flamingoes. All Flamingoes spread out over the lagoon and many feeding. Another flock of 43 Flamingoes. 9 birds smaller and of greyish plumage - probably young ones ? Some birds looked like Lesser Flamingoes - 7 nos.

13. Lesser Whistling Teals - a very big and vociferous flock came from the west and after making a small circle, settled on the waters.
14. Brahminy Ducks - 10 to 12, feeding.
15. Pintails - several flocks near the shore and the islands.
16. Spotbills - several flocks near the shore and the islands.
17. Wigeons - 4 to 5 on a roadside tank.
18. Common Pochards - 15 males and 15 females - amongst several flocks near the shore and the islands.
19. Cotton Teals - among the several flocks near the shore and the islands.
Several 100s of ducks - Owing to the distance many could not be identified with certainty.
20. Pariah Kite.
21. Pale Harrier - a male
22. Whitebellied Sea Eagle - first difficult to identify but later confirmed as this species.
23. Osprey - the identification was unmistakable. It was perched on a pole near the water. Later flew over the water and again settled on the pole. Seen there for a long time.
24. Yellow-wattled Lapwings.
25. Grey Plovers - whitish/grey spotted upper plumage. Greish-Green legs.
26. Golden Plovers - Brownish-golden upper plumage and wings. Greyish-brown spotted breast. With other waders.
27. Lesser Sand Plovers - by the shore.
28. Curlew.
29. Redshanks.
30. Green Sandpiper.
31. Greenshanks - with other waders
32. Spotted (Wood) Sandpipers
33. Little Stints.
34. Snipes (Fantail?) - enroute in the fields and paddies
There were 100s and 100s of waders in the waters. Either moving about or seen feeding.
35. Blackwinged Stilts - more than 100 birds
36. Blackheaded Gull - no white 'mirrors' in flight
37. Gull - unidentified
38. Tern - ? - white head with black lines, black beak and legs. Upper plumage greyish; underparts-white. Gullbilled Tern ??
39. Black Drongo.
40. Yellow Wagtail - ? - blue headed / grey headed?
41. White Wagtail

BIRDS SIGHTED: (At Mallapattu)

1. Dabchicks.
2. Grey (Spotbilled) Pelicans - one bird landed near the water. Later over 100 birds seen near the bund. Some on trees. No nests or young ones seen. Pelicans seen scooping water (or fish) in their pouches and later the water was drained out from the sides while the birds shook their beaks.
3. Indian Shag - ? - In the lake.
4. Little Cormorants.
5. Grey Herons - several - some on the trees
6. Pond Herons - several
7. Large Egrets.
8. Little Egrets.
9. Night Herons - black plumes on their head. White breast and underbelly.
10. Openbilled Storks - 11 nos.
11. White Ibis - 5 nos.
12. Spoonbills - 9 nos.
13. Brahminy Ducks.
14. Pintails.
15. Common Teals.
16. Spotbills.
17. Garganey Teals.
18. Common Pochards.
19. Pariah Kite.
20. Brahminy Kites - 2 birds flying.
21. Pale (Pallid) Harrier - 1 male and 2 females.
22. Marsh Harrier - 1 female.
23. Grey Partridges - 2 flushed out from a bush.
24. Golden Plovers -
25. Greenshanks - feeding near the shore.
26. Green Sandpiper - dark brownish-green upper parts and greenish legs. White under belly, black beak and white stripe through the eye..
27. Spotted (Wood) Sandpiper - on the lake shore.
28. Blackwinged Stilts - several.
29. Ring Doves.
30. Small Blue Kingfisher.
31. Whitebreasted Kingfisher.
32. Golden oriole - a pair.
33. Indian Wren-warbler.

TIPS ON BIRDWATCHING - 2

----Compiled by: SIRAJ A. TAHIR

HOW TO RECOGNISE BIRDS:

1. The easiest way to recognise birds is to start with the common species. This gives you a clearly identified habitat and many opportunities to observe the birds carefully.

2. Choose any 3 common birds and learn their relative sizes and shapes so that when in the field, you can observe and compare other birds with them. eg, whether it is smaller or larger than a Myna or a Sparrow.

3. Notice the shapes, lengths and colours of the birds' beak. These will give you a clue to a birds habits and help identify them. Waders have long and probing bills; Seed-eaters have thick and stubby ones, whereas the insect eaters will have thin and sharply pointed beaks.

4. The shape of the neck while sitting on the water, standing on the shore or while flying provides a clue to many of the water and shore birds. eg., A long and thin neck - must be a cormorant and if short and thick - a duck. Similarly for Egrets, the shape of the neck determines the various species.

5. The length and colour of the legs helps greatly in sorting out the shore birds and also several others. So, you must note this while observing a bird. The difference between a Kentish Plover and the Little Ringed Plover in non-breeding plumage is the colour of their legs.

6. Many birds can be identified by their wing and tail patterns in silhouette. The difference in the wing and tail shapes of the birds of prey (eg. Vultures, Kites, Eagles and Hawks) help pin them down to a group. Further identification can be done by observing field marks and behaviour.

7. Lastly, observe and note field marks, behaviour and also the habitat of the bird. In the field marks, note: (a) Crest if any, (b) face patterns, (c) eye lines and colour, rings or spectacles, (d) breast markings and colour (e) caps and crowns on the head, (f) rump patches, (g) tail marks, (h) wing patterns and markings, both upper and lower and (i) colour of neck, back, head and the underparts.

Make a sketch, no matter how rough or clumsy it may look and note the salient points on it. This will help you when consulting a book or an experienced birdwatcher later on.

8. Some birds are seen singly while others may be in small or large flocks. Some birds may have characteristic behaviour like hopping, hovering or flitting about while feeding. Songs and sounds should also be learnt as far as possible as these are one of the surest ways of identifying a bird provided one is thorough and experienced in this. Habitats in which the birds were seen, the date and time of sighting should also be noted to include or rule out certain migrants.

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BIRDING IN KALYANI DAM AREA (CHITTOOR DIST., ANDHRA PRADESH)

By: V.Santharam

10, Leith Castle South Street, Santhome, Madras - 600 023

The Kalyani Dam, which lies in the Chamala Valley area is only about 12 miles from the Tirupati Town on the Pileru - Bhakarapet Road and all buses going to these places pass through the Kalyani Dam. The bus stops on the main road just a kilometre from the dam site. A pucca road runs to the dam. The inspection bungalow is perched on a hillock on the western side of the reservoir. A range of hills encloses the reservoir and the sight is fascinating from the inspection bungalow.

The environs of the dam are hilly and, there is a good amount of vegetation - ranging from dry scrub to denser and more wooded areas. There are certain areas that are rocky. Lantana is invading the scrub area and at many places this shrub dominates. When we had visited this place in the last week of January, 1980, most of the lantana were in fruit. The reservoir had plenty of water, though some of the streams had dried up. There are very good tracks leading into the interior of the valley and a bird-watcher is certainly rewarded during his walks along these. There is a place known as Pulibonu, a 6 mile walk from the Inspection Bungalow. It has been mentioned often in the books of the well known shikari Kenneth Anderson. There is nothing but a well and a camping platform here. The Kalyani River flows close to this spot. The area is said to be inhabited by several species of mammals (though we never came across any during our 3-day sojurn). Some of these are: Panther, Bear, Sambar, Barking Deer, Boar, Langur, Wild Dog, Jackal, Hares, Mongoose.

Regular poaching is said to be going on here and one night we could follow a hunting party on a motor vehicle on the opposite hill from the bungalow. Grazing and wood cutting is very much prevalent. It would be a good thing if the Chamala Valley as a whole is protected and made a game sanctuary. Certainly it could become one of the best wildlife spots of the south if protected and undisturbed. The place is also ideal for camping, trekking and photography. We heard that the Andhra Pradesh Government is proposing this as a wildlife sanctuary. I sincerely hope they do this as early as possible, and wish all the nature lovers and enthusiasts would support the cause, especially our friends in Andhra Pradesh.

A LIST OF BIRDS SEEN BETWEEN 25th AND 27th JANUARY, 1980

Sl. No.	Family	Species	Remarks
1.	Podicipedidae	Little Grebe	Fairly common
2.	Phalacrocoracidae	Darter	A solitary bird seen on all three days on a partly submerged branch in the dam
3.	Ardeidae	Grey Heron	Solitary bird on 2nd and 3rd day, mainly in flight.
4.	"	Pond Heron	Common
5.	"	Little Egret	1 bird on 1st day.

	Family	Species	Remarks
22.	Columbidae	Blue rock Pigeon	Fairly common.
23.	"	Spotted Dove	Commonly seen and heard
24.	Psittacidae	Roseringed Parakeet	Common
25.	"	Blossom headed Parakeet	Common, moved about in small parties.
26.	Cuculidae	Kocl	Common
27.	"	Small greenbilled Malkoha	Common
28.	"	Crow-Pheasant	Common
29.	Apodidae	House Swift	Fairly Common
30.	Alcedinidae	Pied Kingfisher	Fairly common
31.	"	Common or Small Blue Kingfisher	Fairly common
32.	"	White breasted Kingfisher	Common.
33.	Meropidae	Small green Bee-eater	Common
34.	Capitonidae	Large Green Barbet	Only heard from the trees on the hill top.
35.	"	Coppersmith or Crimsonbreasted Barbet	Common
36.	Pittidae	Indian Pitta	1 bird on 2nd day flew when approached.
37.	Hirundinidae	Dusky crag martin	Fairly common on 2nd and 3rd day near the dam site. Dark under parts.
38.	"	Red rumped swallow	Fairly common in the vicinity of the reservoir (surprisingly the common swallow, Hirundo rustica seen in large numbers in Dimapur was not at all seen here)
39.	Laniidae	Baybacked Shrike	1 - 2 on the first day near the main road.
40.	Oriolidae	Golden Oriole	2 birds in flight on 2nd day.
41.	"	Black-headed Oriole	1 bird on 2nd day
42.	Dicruidae	Black Drongo	Fairly common
43.	"	Whitebellied Drongo	Common the jungle, in fact commoner than Black Drongo. Solitary usually.
44.	Sturiidae	Common Mynah	Common

Sl.	Family	Species	Remarks
6.	Ardeidae	Yellow Bittern	Solitary bird on the 1st day on the partl submerged branch.
7.	Anatidae	Lesser whistling Teal	A few pairs seen on 1st day
8.	"	Spotbill or Grey Duck	Common
9.	Accipitridae	Pariah Kite	Common
10.	"	Shikra	1 - 2
11.	"	Tawny Eagle	1 - 2 birds on 2nd d
12.	"	Marsh Harrier	A fine male, with sil ver-grey and brown plumage gliding over the water on the fina day, giving a very good view.
13.	"	Short-toed Eagle	1 bird seen in flight on the last day.
14.	Falconidae	Shahin Falcon	A beautiful specimen seen on the last day on a tree right behi the I.B. sitting on a branch and preening. Suddenly it flew out towards the other sid across the reservoir, attempting to catch red-rumped swallows i an half-hearted manne and again returning to the same spot.
15.	Phasianidae	Grey Partridge	Common, very vocal.
16.	"	Jungle Bush Quail	2 - 3 birds seen on last day under some bushes, flew suddenl on seeing us.
17.	"	Grey Jungle Fowl	Commonly heard
18.	"	Common Peafowl	4 - 5 birds, all peahens, crossed our path on 2nd ay en- route to Pulibonu. seldom heard.
19.	Rallidae	White breasted waterhen	2 - 3 birds
20.	"	Indian Moorhen	Fairly commonly seen on 1st day.
21.	Charadriidae	Redwattled Lapwing	Common. Agitated ver much by our presence Could it be nesting so early?

Sl. No.	Family	Species	Remarks
45.	Corvidae	Indian Tree Pie	Common
46.	Campaphagidae	Small Minivet	Fairly common.
47.	Irenidae	Common Iora	Common
48.	"	Goldfronted Chloropsis	Fairly common on 2nd day.
49.	Pycnonotidae	Red-whiskered Bulbul	All the three species of bulbuls were very common here. They were so common that never movement passed without seeing them or hearing them. Many bulbuls were seen feeding on the lantana berries.
50.	"	Redvented Bulbul	
51.	"	White-browed Bulbul	
52.	Muscicapidae	Yellow-eyed Babbler	2 - 3 birds seen on 1st day and 1 - 2 on final day.
53.	"	Jungle Babbler	Common
54.	"	Tickell's blue Flycatcher	1 bird seen on 2nd day
55.	"	White-browed fantail flycatcher	Fairly common, seems to be quite unafraid and have good views.
56.	"	Jungle Wren-Warbler	2 - 3 birds seen near Inspection Bungalow on some shrubs on final day.
57.	"	Tailor Bird	Common
58.	"	Blyth's Reed Warbler	Common, heard often.
59.	"	Lesser White-throat	1 bird seen on 1st day.
60.	"	Greenish Warbler	Common but not much as Blyth's reed Warbler
61.	"	Magpie Robin	Common

Sl. No.	Family	Species	Remarks
62.	Muscicapidae	Black Redstart (?)	Female seen on last day. Red on tail conspicuous.
63.	"	Indian Robin	Common
64.	Motacillidae	Yellow Wagtail	1 bird seen on the 1st day flying in the evening
65.	"	Large Pied Wagtail	Common
66.	Dicaeidae	Tickell's Flowerpecker	Common, more often heard than seen
67.	Nectariniidae	Purple Sunbird	Common
68.	"	Purple-rumped Sunbird	Common
69.	Ploceidae	White throated Munia	Seen on 1st and last day. 1-2 birds on 2nd day seen halfway up the track to Pulibonu were collecting nesting material.
70.	"	Spotted Munia	A small flock seen on 1st day evening, drinking off the waters' edge just at the time of sunset

This is not a complete list. A number of birds have escaped our observations. Some birds recorded by our friends at a later date include Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Brahminy Kite, Cormorant and Paradise Flycatcher.

Also we could not identify a rather bigger version of Palm Swift, with brown throat and upper parts and white belly with a long, forked tail, which were fairly common in the air.

Crested Tree Swift?

Notes....

I. Community Preening Behaviour in Babblers:

Dr. A. Shiv Raj

I happened to see the preening behaviour of Babblers at the Agricultural Research Station, Rudrur, Nizamabad Dist. on 6.12.1981. At 7.00 AM I walked into the garden. To my surprise, seven babblers collectively attacked a running green snake measuring about 2 ft. in length and about 1 in thickness. All the birds attacked the snake allover the body, but more on the head and tail. The birds were pecking the snake and using their beaks for preening. This preening and pecking continued for nearly twenty minutes, while the snake struggled to escape. The final blow came when one of the birds pierced the abdomen with its beak and pulled out the intestine. At this moment the snake died and the birds left.

I observed this action of babblers from a distance of six feet. I presume that the birds used the oily substance present under the skin of the snake for preening. Further, it appears that the oily substance may protect the feathers, since the birds looked shiny, soon after preening.

- - - -

5. Purple Sunbird (Nectarinia asiatica):- On 13.2.1983 with 2 chicks was seen in Jawahar Deer Park, Shamirpet.

6. Purplerumped Sunbird (Nectarinia zeylonica):- On 20.3.1983 I observed a pair feeding 2 fledglings in the Nehru Zoological Park.

7. Streaked Baya (Ploceus manyar):- Nesting activity in full swing in the Nehru Zoological Park on 20.3.1983.

8. Spotted Dove (Streptopelia chinensis):- Nest building just started.

9. Coppersmith (Megalaima haemacephala):- One nest hole in a Mango tree, in front of the main office in Nehru Zoological Park. Parents seen feeding 2 chicks on 20.3.1983.

FLOWERING TREES:

1. The Scarlet Bell or Fountain Tree (Spathodea campanulata):- Flowers seen in January, in profusion. Though they are still seen, their numbers have decreased markedly.

2. Mango (Mangifera indica):- Flowers appeared in January.

3. Silk Cotton (Salmalia malabarica):- The first flowers were seen in late January, on the trees in the Public Gardens. Flowering continue through February, and still continues in March. There are some magnificent trees on Chadarghat Crossroads' island.

4. Flame of the Forest (Butea monosperma):- When members of the BSAP visited the Vanasthali on 20.2.1983, the whole area was aflame with this brilliant flower. Vanasthali staff said that these flowers were abloom since a week, and they were still blooming a week later.

5. Spotted Gliricidia (Gliricidia sepium):- The trees in Nehru Zoological Park flowered in mid February.

6. Pink Cassia (Cassia renigera):- Two trees in 'Sarkari Chaman', in front of Osmania General Hospital, flowered in the 2nd fortnight of February.

7. Rain Tree (Samania saman):- Flowering started in first week of March and still continues.

8. Mimosa-leaved Jacaranda (Jacaranda mimosifolia):- Flowers began appearing in the first week of March and are still abloom.

9. Neem (Azadirachta indica):- Flowering began in 2nd week of March and is still on.

10. Copper Pod (Peltophorum roxburghii):- Flowering just beginning.

11. Gulmohar (Delonix regia):- First few blossoms are just appearing.

12. Frangipani (Plumeria rubra). Flowering began in late February and is still in progress. The Pagoda Tree's (P.rubra acutifolia) white flowers also bloomed in late February and are still abloom. on the trees.

13. Asoka Tree (Saraca indica):- Flowers appeared in late February. A few blooms are still on the tree.

- Aashcesh Pittie
14-7-370 Begum Bazar, Hyderabad-500 012

EDITOR'S NOTE: We invite notes from members, regarding nest sightings and flowering trees, for this column.

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and News:

1. In the begining of this year, it was decided by the members that the name of the Birdwatchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh be changed to Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh (BSAP)

2. During the months of January, February and March,1983, the members of the Society went on field trips to Indira Park, Patancheru (ICRISAT), Manjira Reservoir, Mahavir Harina Vanasthali, Shamirpet and Rajendranagar (MARD Campus).

3. The Society has been contemplating to bring out an annual number of its bulletin for quite some time now. We are sure the response from members will be encouraging. Members, as well as others in field of bird study, are invited to send articles on bird/birds of Andhra Pradesh or on any other aspect of bird study in this state.

4. It is proposed to register the BSAP with the Registrar of Public Societies. In this connection the office bearers and an Organising Committee will have to be elected. A meeting of the members will be called for, the date of which shall be communicated shortly.

5. Pressure from fish farmers has forced the Bavarian Ministry of Agriculture to permit shooting of herons (Ardea cinerea) for a 2 month period. There are 1150 breeding pairs in Bavaria but one or two cold winters combined with the shooting could cause local extinction. - ORYX - Oct. 1982.

6. Recent studies at the University of California reveal that oestrogen-like residues of DDT cause feminization of gulls so that male western gulls (Larus occidentalis) at Santa Barbara are unable to breed and the females sit on unfertilized eggs. - ORYX - Oct.82.

7. Ten years after the ban on the use of DDT, bald eagles, ospreys and brown pelicans are increasing in numbers as chemical residues fade. Some migratory birds are still at risk because they absorb DDT in Latin America. ORYX - Oct.'82.

8. A Siberian Crane (Grus leucogeranus) chick hatched on 16 May at the International Crane Foundation in Wisconsin, was the third successful hatch. The male parent is 70 - the oldest captive Siberian crane. There are 200 Siberian cranes in the wild and 25 in captivity. - ORYX- Oct.'82.

GLEANINGS FROM THE PRESS

SIBERIAN CRANES ARRIVE:

The long awaited annual visitors to the Bharatpur National Park - Siberian Cranes - have arrived there. The cranes reached the park on Wednesday (15th Dec.82), almost a week late. Mr.K.S.Sankhala, Chief Wildlife Warden, said here that one Crane arrived at Bharatpur lake on Tuesday (14th Dec.) and 8 were sighted on Wednesday. Thirty-eight cranes including three chicks visited the sanctuary last year.

(19.12.1982)
--The Hindu---

POACHERS OUTWITTED BY BIRDS:

Over 700 highly migratory birds, the Black (Crowned) Night Herons, have for the past one month taken shelter on a tree near a lake in the big compound of the residence of the administrator of Karaikal (Tamilnadu). The herons, which live in flocks, have built nests inside the campus since it is dangerous for them to live outside where they become easy prety to the poachers. Several persons have licensed guns in Karaikal and they hunt the birds for eating and the Marikoravars (gypsies) catch them to sell to the public.

The (Black)Night Herons leave just before dusk to feed on fish in the neighbouring coastal areas and return by early morning. The young birds are also fed on fish. Most of the day time is spent on the trees. For the herons therefore, the administrator's campus is the only safe place, where no one dare enter with evil intentions.

Poaching in the Karaikal region is causing concern to the Bombay Natural History Society, which is conducting studies of the migratory birds from all over the world to the Point Calimere region.

--The Hindu--
(15.12.1982)

BIRDS DRIVE AWAY COBRA:

A fight between parrots defending their nests and a five-foot long marauding cobra held the absorbed attention of residents of the Karamanattankudi area here for more than half an hour on Wednesday.

According to eyewitnesses, crows also joined the parrots in the attack on their common enemy. The noisy fight lasted more than half an hour, by which time it was obvious that the birds were winning.

-Indian Express-
(29.10.1982)

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AASHEESH PITTIE.
14-7-370 BEGUM BAZAR
HYDERABAD-500 012.

9th July, 1983

MAYURA

Newsletter of the Bird Watchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh

VOL. 4 APRIL - JUNE 1983 NO. 2

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For contributing articles to MAYURA and membership of the BSAP, please address: Siraj A. Taher, Hon. Secretary, Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh, 6-3-249/3, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad - 500034.

EDITORIAL:-

The recent spurt of public interest in natural history has helped conservationists to safeguard the existence of some of our rarer birds. Governments of various states have begun to understand the importance of birds as a vital part of a dynamic and healthy environment. A few have gone to the laudable extent of imparting celebrity status to a species of aves, by designating it as a State Bird ! Rajasthan has elected the Great Indian Bustard and more recently, Madhya Pradesh - the Paradise Flycatcher and Punjab - the Hoopoe. Various reasons have been given for the choice of a particular species as a State Bird. The Great Indian Bustard was chosen because of its rarity. The Hoopoe for its utility to the farmer. The Peacock for its beauty.

A State Bird is an eye-opener for the public. People want to know why a particular bird has been nominated. If the chosen bird is rare, it gets a great deal of publicity. Since it is a State Bird, the state tries to do everything to protect and safeguard the existence of the bird (a good example is Rajasthan). People learn the importance of the bird not only as an important part of the environment, but also as an unique species whose disappearance from the earth would be final. Public involvement in matters of environment and conservation becomes active.

The choice of a particular specie will depend upon its utility and status. The utility of a bird can be measured directly as well as indirectly. Insectivorous birds help the farmer keep his fields free of insects. Scavenging birds keep our countryside and even cities clean. Predators control the populations of rats, etc., and save stored foodgrains. Indirectly, birds act as biological monitors. deterioration of the environment due to pollutuon, habitat destruc etc., can easily be detected from the behaviour of birds. A reduction in the larger raptor populations may be due to excessive residue somewhere in the food chain. This makes egg shells thin brittle. The choking of a lake either by effluents or garbage dumping is seen through the deaths of sea/freshwater birds that feed on dead fish, etc., from that lake.

The choice of a state bird is also made keeping in view its status. The bird may be rare or it may be ubiquitous. Rare birds get a chance to survive due to the special interest imparted them. The common birds' utility is brought to the fore and public awareness increases. A bird may also be endemic to the state!

We request our readers to suggest names of birds which might be recommended to the Government of Andhra Pradesh as a State Bird.

- Aasheesh Pittie.

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY:

Edited for Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh by Aasheesh Pittie.

SURVEY OF THE BIRDS OF ANDHRA PRADESH - 9.

By; Pushp Kumar.

VULTURES:-

These large (wing spans upto 9 ft.), ungainly, much maligned and misunderstood creatures are perhaps the most useful birds of our towns and countryside. No sooner does an animal die, it is just thrown outside village limits to rot. The carcass not only becomes a nuisance to passers-by but also a source of infection to the population. Vultures quartering the land with their keen eyes, espy the carcass and soon descend on it one after the other and, in a few hours clean it up with their powerful hooked beaks. The most common species at such carcasses in Andhra Pradesh are the Whitebacked Vultures (Gyps bengalensis) and Indian Scavenger Vultures (Neophron percnopterus). The service they thus render to man is indiscernible and perhaps incalculable. This is dramatically brought out by the action of the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad (MCH), which in its unbounded wisdom, decided to dump garbage from the city next to the Vanasthali, a sanctuary for Blackbuck and a lung space for Hyderabad city. The offall and garbage which would otherwise have made life miserable in the lung space, attracted a horde of Whitebacked, Longbilled, Indian Scavenger and King Vultures, besides Pariah Kites, Crows, etc., which set about to correct the folly of man! Even now this process continues. In the process due to this thoughtless action the soaring vultures are liable to become the target of low flying airfraft. They have also provided birdwatchers a ready made sanctuary for vultures! Vultures at the Vanasthali area, after gorging themselves at the dump, were observed to fly some distance away to a point near a small tank - perhaps to quench their thirst. Thereafter they gathered in the adjacent area, all facing in the direction of the dump and basking on the ground. A few sat on the wall of the Vanasthali. Periodically they took off, laboriously skipping on the ground, making a low sortie around the area and settled down to bask!

Wultures nest in large trees (Whitebacked) or in rock crevices (Indian Scavenger). The presence of large trees and undisturbed rocky outcrops are essential. Both these are now steadily disappearing. When the vultures are gone what will happen to our countryside?

Though lumped with the Birds of Prey or Raptors, vultures are not known to kill any animal themselves. They feed mostly on carrion.

Of the 14 species of Old World Vultures listed, 10 species and subspecies are reported from the Indian Sub-continent. In Andhra Pradesh 5 species are reported.

BLACK or KING VULTURE (Sarcogyps calvus) (Seopoli).

Telugu: Nalla Borawa, Ra bandu Urdu: Raj Gidh, Bhaonra.

Resident. Sparsely distributed throughout the state. In a congregation of Whitebacked and Scavenger vultures, one or two may be seen squabbling over a carcass - with ruddy faces. In the gathering of over a thousand near Vanasthali (see above), only 3 or 4 individuals were observed.

INDIAN GRIFFON VULTURE (Gyps fulvus fulvescens) Hume.

Telugu: Erra Borawa (?) Urdu: Gidh.

Non-resident. Scarce and patchy. One and possibly two specimens seen in flight along with Whitebacked over Mannanur plateau. One specimen seen among the gathering of vultures in Vanasthali, referred to above, when it looked distinctive. However, as mentioned in the Handbook, requires further authentication since it could easily be confused with Longbilled vultures, both in flight and on ground, unless seen together at the same time. This incidentally, extends the range of this vulture to A.P.

INDIAN LONGBILLED VULTURE (Gyps indicus indicus) (Scopoli).

Telugu: Borawa. Urdu: Gidh.

Resident. Common throughout the state, but not as common as the Whitebacked. Seen in mixed gatherings with Whitebacked vultures at carcasses, squabbling, hobbling and gobbling large chunks of meat. Bolder than Whitebacked, standing their ground against pariah dogs. Small breeding colony in the rocky hillocks on the road to Medak near Sangur.

INDIAN WHITEBACKED VULTURE (Gyps bengalensis) (Gmelin).

Telugu: Matti pudum-gadu (?) Urdu: Gidh.

Resident. Easily the commonest vulture seen throughout the state, with a few of the Longbilled and Indian Scavenger vultures. Also much more easily identified than the Longbilled vultures due to the white back - seen as the birds bank gracefully during flight. These patient birds can also be seen along with Pariah Kites near the slaughter houses at Kamatipura, Ziaguda, etc., in Hyderabad city. A breeding colony was seen in November 1981 in Kalapgul village near the Manjira barrage. The tree occupied was a Neem (Azadiracta indica) near a dilapidated temple of Shiva. The large congregation of vultures observed at the municipal garbage dump near Vanasthali, consisted of a fair number of juveniles. Yet there are no large trees nearby where they might be nesting. White excretal marks on outcrops of rocks in the region bear ample evidence of their nesting and roosting places. Yet the army of vultures when observed during the daytime was seen basking on the ground, some birds seen actually stretched out flat - on the ground. They did not appear to be having a sand or mud bath. Backs stretched out straight, just relaxing after a good meal. Thanking the thoughtful MCH ? How do they wash off the gore from their faces and necks? How often do they go to water, how often do they feed?, are some of the unanswered questions. The Whitebacked are observed to mix freely with the Longbilled. Do they hybridize in nature? When new comers came in to join the basking group, they circled low and landed at the rear and hobbled forward to join the 'army filling in 'gaps' in the formation!

. . contd.

INDIAN SCAVENGER VULTURE (Neophron percnopterus ginginianus) (Latham).

Telugu: Tella Borawa, Peethiri gadda. Urdu: Safed Gidh.

Resident. Occurs throughout the state. Seen easily near habitations because of its white plumage, in parties of 3s or 4s. Also in congregations of Whitebacked and Longbilled vultures at carcasses, boldly going in to get their share before the carcass is picked clean. In eating, does not plunge deep into the carcass like the other vultures. Nests in crevices of rocks and boulders in which the country around Hyderabad abounds. One pair observed to nest regularly in the Shamirpet Deer Park on the ledge and crevices between the "big and 2nd toes" of the "foot-like" formation in front of the rest hut. One young seen in December 1982. By March the juvenile was flying and, 3 vultures could be observed sailing, gliding on motionless wings over the Shamirpet Lake. A number of juveniles were seen in the congregation of vultures observed near Vanasthali. The brown plumage being distinctive. One pair observed in March 1983 in Nelapattu sanctuary, approaching the dwindling water, which was occupied by grey pelicans, little egrets, little cormorants, etc., very cautiously, and one after the other. Also observed along the sea coast near Vizag, often confusing the observer who is looking out for the Sea Eagles! Takes the rejects and offal from the outskirts of the fishing village on the shore near Vizag. Glides up the hills, taking advantage of the upturned sea breeze, crests the tops and glides gracefully away in the valleys between the hills.

ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT:-

As many readers may know, the Bombay Natural History Society will be celebrating the completion of the first 100 years of its existence in September 1983. To mark the occassion, the Society has planned to bring out a number of special natural history publications. One of these which should be of special interest to birdwatchers is the Illustrated Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent. Illustrations by John Henry Dick, the famous American bird-artist, text by Salim Ali and S. Dillon Ripley. The 106 plates - 73 colour, and 33 black and white - illustrate every single species of bird found in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka, The brief captions given information on the size, status, habitat and distribution of each species, making the volume a comprehensive and handy fieldguide. The book will be priced at the low figure of Rs 120/- (Rs 100/- for members of the Bombay Natural History Society) so that it may keep within the range of a majority of interested people. Copies can be had from Bombay Natural History Society after 15th September 1983.

- Newsletter For Birdwatchers XXIII/5&6/4.

A THEORY ON THE FLIGHT CORRIDOR OF FLAMINGOES IN SOUTHERN INDIA.

By:- A.N. Jagannatha Rao, 18, 4th Main Road, Gandhinagar, Adyar, Madras-600020.

In the world there are 4 species of Flamingoes. Of these, India has two.

1. The Greater Flamingo (Phoenicopterus ruber) and,
2. The Lesser Flamingo (Phoeniconnias minor).

These two species are known to breed in the Rann of Kutch (Gujarat State), on isolated islands, from the months of August to December. They lay one egg each, into specially built mud mounds, on these islands. Literally, there are tens of thousands of nests on the island, which is called 'Flamingo City'. When winter sets in during early December, these birds migrate to warmer zones both, for better climates and fresh feeding areas. These birds are suddenly seen in large flocks along the East Coast of India on the mudflats and salt swamps. Starting from Chilka Lake in Orissa as the northern-most point, they extend southwards right upto the lower tip of Sri Lanka to a place called Bundala. Another flight corridor seems to be Sambar Lake - Bharatpur - Sultanpur; in the North. Flamingoes have also been recorded in Arunachal Pradesh, and are suspected to come from the Black Sea in Russia.

In Southern India they have been seen on Chilka Lake, Naupada Swamp (Orissa), all along the mouths of Godavari and Krishna rivers, Lake Pulicat (A.P.), Marakanam salt flats of Tamil Nadu, Point Calimere and, further South on the Ramanathapuram coast - and finally, on the East coast of Sri Lanka.

It is therefore felt that these birds, that breed in the Rann of Kutch on the North-West coast, migrate along two distinct flight corridors. They leave Gujarat by January and seem to return only by May or June.

One corridor, the birds take, is along Sambar Lake in Rajasthan, then in to Bharatpur and then eastwards upto Sultanpur in Haryana.

Since birds are seen in thousands along the East coast, it is presumed that these are the same that breed in the Rann of Kutch. Therefore the question arises as to the routes these birds take from West to East during their migration, and their return from East to West. There are three possibilities;

1) One is along the West Coast down to Kerala and then around Kanyakumari to Sri Lanka and towards Point Calimere right upto Chilka Lake.
2) Another possibility is just fly across the peninsula from West to East.
3) The third possibility is a distinct flight corridor as described below.

Since no observations have been recorded along the West Coast and Kerala, the first path is vetoed. Regarding the second, we have found that occurence of Flamingoes in any inland lakes east of Western Ghats has been very rare. On the other hand authentic recorded observations have been made near Nalsarovar (Gujarat), Pune (Maharashtra), Bellary (Karnataka), Medak, Hyderabad, Kurnool (A.P.) and so on. This has led to a pattern of movement which has made us feel that a flight corridor

exists. Plotting the points where Flamingoes have been seen, give rise to the following postulations;

1) Flamingoes fly along river courses and river valleys, which means that they guide their path by sight and that they fly low, possibly within 1000 metres above ground. Also, they do not seem to be capable of flying over mountain ranges which are higher than 1000m.
2) Since both species of Flamingoes are specialised feeders in saline swamps, it is assumed that during their coast to coast flight, they rest on inland lakes for periods from 3 days to one week. They do not seem to feed much. But from the point of view of safety, they prefer large lakes.
3) Their flight seems to be in stages and, each hop or stage seems to be about 400km. On these assumptions we checked on the lakes, on the postulated routes, which are about 400km apart and, sure enough we found Flamingoes.
4) It is most probable that the return migration is also along the same route which means, Flamingoes are likely to be seen on the same lakes during May-June.

So we have boldly assumed the Southern Flight Corridor of the Flamingoes. Now to make it interesting we sent out printed reply-paid post cards to various friends on the assumed routes. The replies were positive and encouraging. It is understood that Flamingoes are not breeding at Rann of Kutch for the past 6 years. Maybe there is a serious ecological disturbance. Also, disturbances along the flight corridor should be minimised by declaring the lakes where the Flamingoes are seen as waterfowl refuges.. All this effort needs further data.

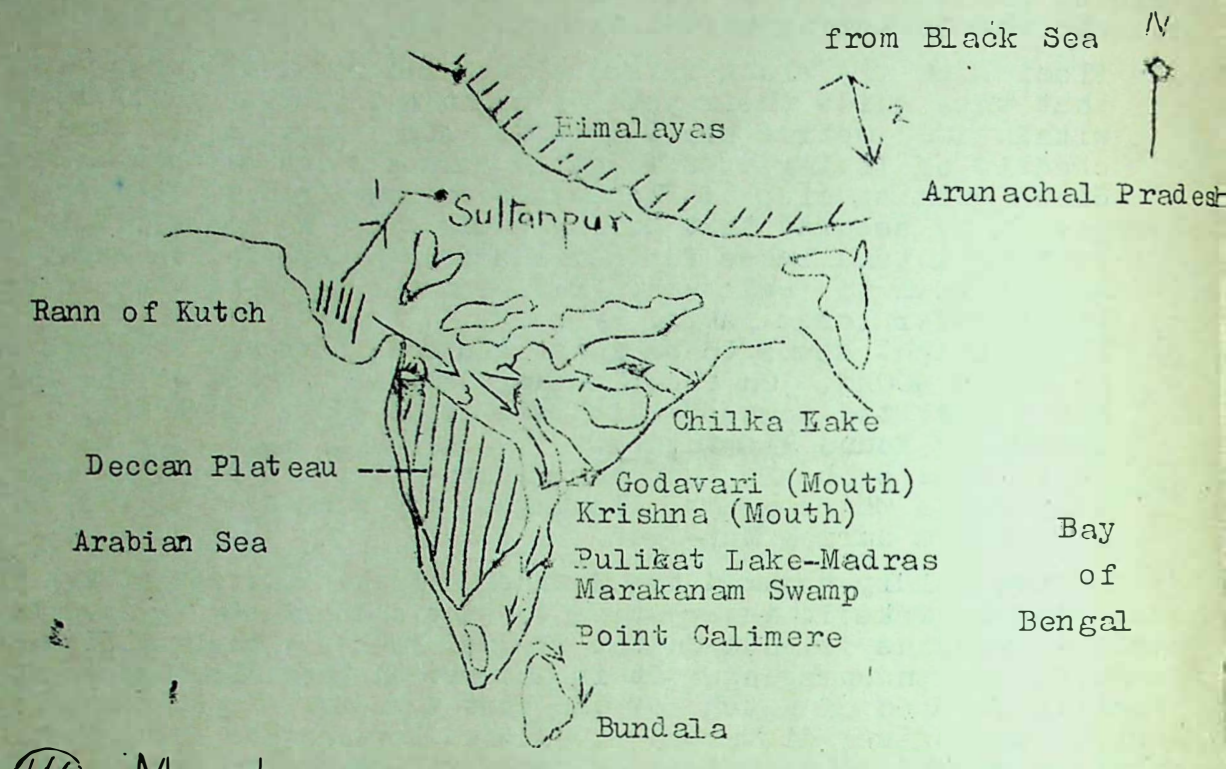
Editors' Note:-

1) The Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan by Drs. Ali and Ripley gives the breeding period of the Greater Flamingo as Sept/Oct - Mar/Apr.
2) The author has sent 30 reply-paid printed post cards to the Hon. Secretary - of this Society - and has requested the cooperation of our Society in collecting further data of the flight path of Flamingoes.

- see overleaf for illustration.

"Every year about one million sea-birds are killed incidentally by fishing nets; many are species that provide food for humans, either as eggs or adults. The decline of the east Pacific anchoveta fishery has resulted in a tremendous decline in guano-producing birds. Between 1946 and 1950 the populations of the Guanay Cormorant, Peruvian Booby and the Brown Pelican on the Chincha Islands, off Peru, were estimated at about 35 million. They consumed two or three million tonnes of anchovetas per year, but the larger quantities of guano they produced was exported as fertilizer and was of great economic importance to Peru. Since 1955 the fishing industry has been invaded by multi-million dollar companies. Overfishing of the anchoveta has brought disaster to the seabirds. Between 1957-58 over 13 million birds died, many drowned in fishing nets; this was 64% of the population, and by '56 only 4million were left, 1/5th of their former no. The collapse of the guano industry has had serious economic and social consequences for Per

- ORYX: XVI/5/416.



MAP OF INDIA SHOWING 2 NORTHERN FLIGHT CORRIDORS AND 1 SOUTHERN FLIGHT CORRIDOR - (1) (2) and (3) RESPECTIVELY.

BIRDWATCHING AT ETURNAGARAM WILDLIFE SANCTUARY - WARANGAL DISTRICT.

By:- Aasheesh Pittie, 14-7-370 Begum Bazar, Hyderabad-500012.

Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary is an 80km drive from Warangal. The Forest Department of Andhra Pradesh has built 4 cottages and a dining hall, with all modern facilities for tourists, within the sanctuary. There is also a cook who takes care of the food! We reached the sanctuary on 29th May 1982 and stayed till 2nd June 1982. Throughout our stay only one day was unbearably hot, the 30th of May. Temperatures must have varied between 42°C and 32°C, in those 3 days. On the 31st we had rain in the evening.

The forests of Eturnagaram are the Dry Deciduous type. Tall trees, scanty undergrowth bristling with thorns and the occassional bamboo clumps. Most of our birdwatching was done while we were on foot, trekking through the south-east part of the sanctuary. We walked below the tall trees, up the low hills and along dry stream beds. Most streams contained just squelchy mud in which the foot prints of myriads of creatures were clearly seen. For the birdwatchers of our group of 9 (all members of the Hyderabad Nature Club), this trip was an heavenly experience - for Eturnagaram is rich in avifauna.

Systematic List of Birds Seen:

1. Paddy Bird (Ardeola grayii) - This bird was seen only in the fields around the forests. Though the fields were empty and dry, these birds were seen searching for insects in their typical fashion.
2. Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) - Some of them still had a few wisps of the yellow breeding plumage on them. Most did not. They were not so common as the former, but were seen with the Paddy Birds.
3. Pariah Kite (Milvus migrans) - Throughout our stay, we saw just 2 of these birds!
4. Indian Shikra (Accipiter badius) - 2 or 3 sighted.
5. Crested Hawk-Eagle (Spizaetus cirrhatus) - One bird seen deep in the jungle. It was creating quite a comotion among the younger aves.
6. Crested Serpent Eagle (Spilornis cheela) - On the day we were returning, we saw this bird perched in all its royalty on a bough midway up a tree.
7. Egyptian Vulture (Neophron percnopterus) - The only vulture we saw on this trip. These were quite common.
8. Grey Partridge (Francolinus pondicerianus) - Seen at dusk in the teak plantation of Venkatapuram.
9. Grey Jungle Fowl (Gallus sonneratii) - One female, scuttling away into the undergrowth.
10. Peafowl (Pavo cristatus) - The morning and the evenings would resound with the call of our national bird. While returning on the 1st of June from a stream, we spotted a flock of 2-3 hens and 1 cock.
11. Redwattled Lapwing (Vanellus indicus) - common.
12. Yellow-wattled Lapwing (Vanellus malabaricus) - rarer than above.
13. Little Ringed Plover (Charadrius dubius) - One bird on a stream-bed. Could it be the resident variety?
14. Stone Curlew (Burhinus oedicnemus) - 2 birds on rocky soil.
15. Indian Courser (Cursorius coromandelicus) - I saw one bird scuttle in front of our jeep at dusk.
16. Green Pigeon (Treron phoenicoptera) - 2 birds seen on the top of a roadside tree.
17. Southern Green Imperial Pigeon (Ducula aenea) - the most beautiful pigeon I have seen so far. They are quite common, mostly found in pairs, flying low overhead, or atop a tree.
18. Ring Dove (Streptopelia decaocto) - not very common.
19. Spotted Dove (Streptopelia chinensis) - very common. Mostly seen on the road. They wait until the last moment, and just when I think the speeding vehicle will run over them, they rise and flap off, twisting and turning in mid flight.
20. Large Indian Parakeet (Psittacula eupatria) - a few flocks.

21. Roseringed Parakeet (Psittacula krameri).
22. Blossomheaded Parakeet (Psittacula cyanocephala).
23. Pied Crested Cuckoo (Clamator jacobinus) - 4 birds seen.
24. Common Hawk- Cuckoo (Cuculus varius) - very common.
25. Indian Cuckoo (Cuculus micropterus - very common.
26. Plaintive Cuckoo (Cacomantispasserinus) - heard once.
27. Crow Pheasant (Centropussinensis) - half a dozen sightings.
28. Spotted Owlet (Athenebrama) - one bird seen.
29. Common Indian Nightjar (Caprimulgus asiaticus) - very common.
30. Franklin's Nightjar (Caprimulgusaffinis) - one bird, identified by its call.
31. House Swift (Apusaffinis).
32. Palm Swift (Cypsiurus parvus).
33. Crested Swift (Hemiprocne longipennis) - an occassional bird, soaring effortlessly with other swifts or alone. The size alone gives rise to the conjecture that is the crested swift. It is much bigger than any other swift I have seen.
34. Small Blue Kingfisher (Alcedo atthis).
35. Whitebreasted Kingfisher (Halcyonsmyrnensis).
36. Small Green Bee-Eater (Meropsorientalis).
37. Indian Roller (Coraciasbenghalensis) - very common.
38. Grey Hornbill (Tockusbirostris) - 2 birds seen.
39. Green Barbet (Megalaimazeylanica) - one bird.
40. Goldenbached Woodpecker (Dinopiumbenghalense).
41. Mahratta Woodpecker (Piccidesmahrattensis) - one bird.
42. Indian Pitta (Pitta brachyura) - quite common. Seen along dry streams and also under dense undergrowth. The flash of blue wing in flight reminds one of the kingfishers.
43. Ashycrowned Finch Lark (Eremopterix grisea).
44. Golden Oriole (Oriolus oriolus).
45. Blackheaded Oriole (Oriolus xanthornus) - very common.
46. Black Drongo (Dicrurusadsimilis).
47. Whitebellied Drongo (Dicruruscaerulescens) - imitates the Shikra very well.
48. Southern Large Racket-tailed Drongo (Dicrurusparadiseus) - quite common near the streams.
49. Brahminy Myna (Sturnus pagodarum).
50. Pied Myna (Sturnus contra) - 2 birds in a field.
51. Common Myna (Acridotheres tristis).
52. Indian Tree Pie (Dendrocitta vagabunda).
53. House Crow (Corvussplendens).
54. Jungle Crow (Corvusmacrorhynchos).
55. Blackheaded Cuckoo Shrike (Coracina melanoptera).
56. Little Minivet (Pericrocotus cinnamomeus).
57. Iora (Aegithinatiphia).
58. Redvented Bubbul (Pycnonotus cafer).
59. Common Babbler (Turdoidescaudatus).
60. Jungle Babbler (Turdoidesstriatus).
61. Whiteheaded Babbler (Turdoidesaffinis).
62. Whitebrowed Fantail Flycatcher (Rhipidura aureola).
63. Paradise Flycatcher (Terosiphoncparadisi) - immature males were very common.
64. Blacknaped Blue Flycatcher (Hypothymis azurea) - one bird.
65. Tickell's Blue Flycatcher (Muscicapa tickelliae).
66. Ashy Wren Warbler (Priniasocialis).
67. Tailor Bird (Orthotomussutorius).

3.. Magpie Robin (Copsychus saularis).
4.. Indian Robin (Saxicoloides fulicata).
5.. Pied Bushchat (Saxicola caprata).
1.. Whitethroated Ground Thrush (Zoothera citrina).
2.. Grey Tit (Parus major).
3.. Large Pied Wagtail (Motacilla maderaspatensis).
4.. Tickell's Flowerpecker (Dicaeum erythrorhynchos).
5.. Purplerumped Sunbird (Nectarinia Zeylonica).
6.. Purple Sunbird (Nectarinia asiatica).
7.. White Eye (Zosterops palpebrosa).

The absence of a good population of the birds of prey was a striking feature of our birdwatching in the sanctuary. Otherwise it was a very good experience.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES:-

1.- The Tailor Bird's Nest.

By; O.C. Edwards.

The nidification of birds is no less an enthralling subject for study than is the study of the bird itself.

The Tailor Bird's nest is greatly admired by many and the bird is rightly considered a great architect, but I consider the Weaver Bird a much greater architect; but about this another time, perhaps.

Let us watch a Tailor Bird building. We must do this from a distance and without letting the bird know that it is being observed or else it will abandon the work and select another spot.

It sometimes chooses a single large leaf and sometimes two or three smaller ones to turn into a funnel in which to build its nest. If it is a single leaf, it pierces the two edges with a series of small holes which, ofcourse, are not directly opposite each other. It then pushes some cotton wool or similar material through a hole in one edge. This expands into a little ball on the other side, or the bird may even fluff it out so as to form a rivet. Taking each edge with the leg, the bird draws the two edges together and pushes the other end of the cotton through the opposite hole. This usually holds the edges fairly close together, but often there is a gap. I feel sure that quite often the edges spring apart owing to the springiness of the leaf and, I suppose, the bird makes several attempts before succeeding. The other 'tacks' or sutures would require less effort. In the case of two leaves, it is amusing to watch the bird doing the 'splits', holding one leaf by each foot, when the distance between the leaves is much, in order to bring the leaves together while it pushes the cotton through a hole. Having made the funnel, the bird builds its nest inside, using fine fibres bent round to form the foundwork and then lines this with cotton wool or vegetable down. The funnel, when first made, is often not vertical but at an angle and sometimes almost horizontal. The weight of the filling and of the birds makes it vertical.

Some scientists maintaintthat birds do everything by instinct and have no reasoning power at all. Be that as it may, I once photographed the nest of a pair of Tailor Birds which would appear to give credence to the belief. The photograph shows the female at the mouth of the nest. The pair, for both build, chose ahuge leaf of a potted plant. This leaf measured anout two feet in length and about 9 inches in width, and had a mid-rib. It was vertical. What should have been a funnel turned out to be a cylinder open at both ends. The poor birds must have been putting in cotton wool as fast as it slipped down the one-foot tube. Finally their efforts paid off and resulted in a sort of bolster about one foot in height. On this the female was preparing to lay her eggs.

One naturalist, having occasionally seen a dry leaf attached to a Tailor Bird's nest, was inclined to think that this was a device deliberately employed by the bird. I find myself in disagreement with this since this would make the nest conspicuous as it is among green leaves and is itself attached to green leaves. Since the whole weight of the nest and birds is borne by one or more petioles, it is probable that an occasional one gets broken by the stress and strain and so the leaf dries.

I have seen nests in deciduous trees, but have never seen or heard of a nest falling due to the shedding of the leaves by the tree. Perhaps it is just by chance that the seasons do not coincide.

II - Tips On Birdwatching - 3.

Compiled By; Siraj A. Taher.

How And When To Watch Birds.

1. There are TWO main factors in obtaining a good view of a bird - have the light in the right place (ie., by not directly looking into the sun) and to be inconspicuous.
2. The best time to watch birds is soon after dawn when they give out their most spectacular displays (sometimes this is again repeated at dusk). By mid-day the activity is much less. A day soon after the rains may be especially rewarding.
3. Try to avoid bad sun conditions and positions as far as possible as identifying birds in silhouettes is difficult. Very bright light can produce extraordinaryily misleading colours as also the orange-red of dawn and dusk.
4. A generally quiet and cautious approach is important. Laughter, loud talking or sudden movements can warn birds of your approach and they will be out of sight before you reach them.
5. As much as birds can see or hear you approaching, you can be also forewarned of their presence by listening for their calls or songs.
6. Walk as cautiously as possible in heavy shrubland and forest areas so as not to make noise by the snapping of branches, rustling of leaves on the ground or treading on dead or fallen branches which sometimes snap very loudly.

7. Use whatever cover available when approaching the feeding places of ducks, waders, etc., in the bay of the lakes and on shore.

8. Wear inconspicuous clothing that give a certain amout of camouflage in the particular habitat. Use dull coloured head-gear and soft-soled but sturdy shoes.

9. Some species of birds like the babblers or larks may be very confiding and let you approach them quite close. Others are not so confiding, like the Redwattled Lapwing or the sandpipers and their piercing alarm calls will give away your presence to the other birds and may frighten them away.

10. Breeding displays of birds begins as soon as the season starts. The birds at such times are much noisier and can be easily spotted.

11. Nesting birds seen carrying twigs, leaves, dry grass or insects may give away their nesting site. DO NOT FOLLOW THEM as you may frighten them away permanently.

12. Never chase or disturb the birds unnecessarily, especially in severe weather or when newly arrived and are very tired migrants.

13. Under all circumstances the BIRDS' INTEREST MUST COME FIRST. After all, we want birds to watch in future, and conservation is not founded on disturbance.

III - Birdwatching At Banjara Hills.

By; Humayun Taher.

On a clear Saturday morning on 6th February, 1983 at 6.30 a.m., two of my friends, myself and father went birdwatching to a valley in Banjara Hills. There is a lake in this valley which is completely covered with water lillies and hyacinths. The lake also has rocks and boulders and fields around it. Habitations surround the lake and every day the women wash their clothes and the men wash their buffaloes in this lake. This results in pollution in the lake. In summer the lake dries up very fast but come spring, the rain fills up the dry lake surprisingly fast. Then the many regular inhabitants of the lake return again. In the dry valley the lake is popularly known as the 'Singara' Lake and is a fascinating bird haunt because the birds do not seem to mind the humans around them as long as they are at a distance. The many shoreside rocks provide good resting and sunning places for the cormorants and egrets. Ther waters abound with fish including the tasty 'maral'. The fish-eaters are therefore always around.

We had all gone to the place at a time of the year when the Blue Rock Thrush is seen on the rocks around the lake. The moment we saw one, we all dropped our various loads and focussed our binoculars on the bird. At that moment my friends' attention was drawn to a jet black bird with a red belly and tail - the Black Redstart! Many Spotted Munias were seen there and the Small Blue Kingfisher and the White-breasted Kingfisher were also around. We were lucky enough to see the Pied Kingfisher which is rarer in this lake. The kingfishers kept hovering over the water or diving, searching for a titbit in a frog or a fish.

The water is also a common haunt of the Pheasant-tailed Jacana. This wonderous bird in full breeding plumage can be sighted from June to early September. We saw it however, in non-breeding plumage. On the lake itself, the Little Grebes or Dabchicks swim about freely in the company of the much larger Coot. The Redwattled Lapwing, Pond Heron, Little and Cattle Egrets and very rarely the Little Cormorant can be seen also. On this day we were lucky to see all these birds. Grey Wagtail, House Swift, Blue Rock Pigeon and other birds including two raptors namely the Pariah Kite and the Kestrel were also seen.

Some other birds seen were the Common Myna, the Spotted Doves, and the Common Swallows. The White and the Large Pied Wagtail and the Black drongo were seen flying along. We also saw the Whitcheaded Babbler and a male Indian Robin and also many Roseringed Parakeets and House Crows. A surprise greeting us at a place near the lake was the call of the Grey Partridge. Sunbird-sounds could also be heard.

The variety of birds seen here is rapidly decreasing and the human species is rapidly increasing. There is but a faint hope that the lake will not dry out and the birds will not vanish completely. Right now the place with its several birds enchants me. The valley has always been my favourite birdwatching haunt and it shall remain until it dries out completely or till at least one bird still lives there!

Editors' Note: the author, at 13 years, is the youngest member of the Society and is affectionately called "Hawk" for his prowess in spotting birds is as quick.

IV - A Birdwatching Trip To Medak.

By; Rajiv Mathews.

I had been to Medak last October (1982) for a few days to beat off the city life. On a cool morning we set off by car and reached Medak. There I did some birdwatching and saw the Crested Hawk-Eagle (Spizaetus cirrhatus), the Grey Hornbill (Tockus birostris), the Great Indian Horned Owl (Bubo bubo), the Large Cuckoo-Shrike (Coracina novaehollandiae), Blackheaded Cuckoo-Shrike (Coracina melanoptera), Chestnut Bittern (Ixobrychus cinnamomeus), Laggar Falcon (Falco biarmicus), Yellowthroated Sparrow (Petronia xanthocollis), and Tawny Eagle (Aquila rapax), to name a few.

The next day we decided to visit Pocharam Wildlife Sanctuary, which is about 16kms. from Medak. This place was a treat as we saw about 17 Greater Flamingoes (Phoenicopterus roseus) flying low over the water, their long legs and long necks stretched parallel to the surface of the lake.

Back at Medak I saw a bird hovering. It was too big for a Kestrel or a Blackwinged Kite. The head and throat from below looked streaked. The wings had light lines or markings in continuous parallel lines and the tail coverts were marked black. The wings were very broad and the tail was rounded. I racked my brains on this bird and on returning to Hyderabad refered the book, 'Birds of Southern India' by Baker and Inglis - and found it to be the Short-toed Eagle (Circaetus galli-

cus)!

Thus, for the first time on this trip I saw the Great Indian Horned Owl, the Laggar Falcon, Flamingoes and the Short-toed Eagle.

W - The Blackthroated Weaver Bird (Ploceus benghalensis) On The Musi River, Hyderabad City.

By; Siraj A. Taher and Aasheesh Pittie.

On the 5th of June 1983, along with some birdwatchers, we saw many large flocks of the Blackthroated Weaver Birds (Ploceus benghalensis) on a stretch of the Musi River. This area may be reached by taking a diversion (to the left) from NH 9, while travelling from Malakpet TV Tower to Saroornagar - which leads to a village called Kottapet. A new bridge is being constructed across the river here. The birds were seen in the fields, etc. on the right bank. The habitat is ideal for these birds. The banks are overgrown with coarse green grass, which the local people cultivate and use for cattle fodder. There are also a few paddies. The water is carpeted with water hyacinth and the bank has clumps of reeds intermittently.

The flocks, which also had quite a few Bayas (Ploceus philippinus) and a sprinkling of Streaked Weaver Birds (Ploceus manyar), were quite agitated and were seen flying around, now perching on the overhead wires, now on the acacias, now in low bushes. Many birds were feeding in fallow fields too. A conservative estimate of their numbers would be around 250-300. The males were in brilliant breeding plumage - but there was no sign of nesting activity. This however needs further study. We had visited the area in the late afternoon. Subsequent visits in the morning showed most birds, busy in the impenetrable tangle of water hyacinth!

The distribution of this species is given in the Handbook, thus; "An endemic species. Common, but locally and capriciously distributed. Pakistan and northern India from NWFP east through Punjab, the Gangetic Plain, Bangladesh, Assam and Manipur, also Sind, Kutch, Gujarat and Bhandup near Bombay; one record from Bastar, south-east M.P."

Only further observations will show whether these birds are 'escapees' or these flocks comprise a viable wild-and-breeding population. Would this mean an extension of their range ??

VI - On The Nesting Of Birds And Flowering Of Trees - 2.

By; Aasheesh Pittie.

Nesting Birds:-

1. Redwattled Lapwing (Vanellus indicus):- On the 8th of May 1983, three chicks (approximately 10 days old) were seen in the rhino enclosure of the Nehru Zoological Park.
2. Spotted Dove (Streptopelia chinensis):- Mr. Mohd. Ali Khan reports the nesting of this bird in a bougainvillea bush in April 1983.

3. Spotted Owlet (Athene brama):- One pair observed nesting in a hole in the wall of a well at Toli Chowki, in April 1983, by Mr. Mohd. Ali Khan.
4. Small Green Bee Eater (Merops orientalis):- The nesting season seems to be from Feb to May. Two immature birds were seen in the Nehru Zoological Park (NZP) on 22-5-1983. They were being fed by adult although both flew well. They differed from the adult in that their tails were rounded and lacked the extended central tail feathers. The throat and belly were lemon coloured.
5. Ashycrowned Finch Lark (Eremopterix grisea):- Members of the Society had a good look at this birds' nest on their field trip to Himayat Sagar on 27-3-1983. The female was brooding 2 eggs.
6. Brahminy Myna (Sturnus pagodarum):- One pair nesting in a hole in the wall of a staff quarter of the NZP in May-June 1983. Incidentally, this pair has been nesting in the same hole since 2 years now.
7. Common Myna (Acridotheres tristis):- One pair nesting in a hole in the trunk of a Jacaranda tree in the Sarkari Chaman - in the 1st week of May 1983. Another pair commenced building in the 3rd week of May, in a hole in a wall at home, and the young ones fledged in the 3rd week of June 1983.
8. House Crow (Corvus splendens):- Nesting in full swing throughout the city. The first nest was seen in the middle of April. One nest, on the top of a Polyalthia longifolia contains 2 four-day old chicks on 30-6-1983.
9. Redvented Bulbul (Pycnonotus cafer):- Nest building commenced in the 2nd week of April. Some birds continue making nests in last week of May.
10. Whitebrowed Bulbul (Pycnonotus luteolus):- One nest built in a low bush in the NZP, seen on 22-5-1983. This nest was not seen on 24-5-1983.
11. Jungle Babbler (Turdoides striatus):- Two pairs seen collecting nesting material in the NZP in the 2nd and 3rd week of June 1983 respectively. One nest was being constructed on a Bauhinia tree, while the other on a tamarind tree.
12. Whiteheaded Babbler (Turdoides affinis):- On 3-4-1983 I observed a pair collecting small twigs and dry grass in the NZP. They flew up with full beaks, into a dense bauhinia tree where I spotted the nest - about 20' above ground level.
13. Indian Robin (Saxicoloides fulicata):- Mr. Siraj Taher observed a nest for the 3rd consecutive year, in the cover of an airconditioner, in the 3rd week of April 1983. One egg seen on 27th April did not hatch. On 10-5-1983, 2 more eggs were laid - of which one hatched and the chick fledged.
14. Tailor Bird (Orthotomus sutorius):- On 17-6-1983, a bird was seen carrying nesting material up into a tree in the NZP. The nest was approximately 20' above ground level!
15. Streaked Baya (Ploceus manyar):- Even as we go to press, the nesting colony in the NZP is very busy. There are 30 complete nests (though all do not have occupants) and 28 nests are in the helmet stage. Female bayas were entering the nests with beaks full of green caterpillars!

Flowering Trees:-

Many of the trees which commenced flowering in the first quarter of this year continued to flower sporadically into the second quarter.

Among them were neem, frangipani, spotted gliricidia, rain tree, jacaranda and copper pod.

1. Gulmohar (Delonix regia):- In the last week of April, the gulmohar trees in the city were resplendant with red and orange flowers. Though the peak flowering was over by the 3rd week of May, some trees still bear flowers.
2. Indian Laburnum (Cassia fistula):- On the 8th of May 1983, members of the Society saw a couple of these trees in full bloom at Shamirpet. The flowering of the young trees in the NZP faded in the last week of May, but an occassional bunch kept sprouting well into June.
3. Queen of Flowers (Lagerstroemia speciosa):- Very few trees exist in and around Hyderabad. Their flowering began in late April and was over by 15-5-1983.
4. Bougainvillea:- The various species of this shrub were heavy with colourful flowers in April. The peak flowering was in that month, though some straggled on till the begining of June.

I take this opportunity and request the members of the Society and the readers of MAYURA to keep a look-out for nesting birds and flowering trees, and let us know about any such records so that a clearer picture of the nesting and flowering phenomemon emerges.

NEWS:-

1. In the 2nd quarter of the year, members of the Society went on field trips to Himayat Sagar (8-4-1983), Shamirpet (8-5-1983), Nehru Zoological Park (12-6-1983) and the NIRD Campus in Rajendranagar (12-6-1983).

2. On 27-3-1983, members had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Shanmuganathan, Addl. CCF (W.L.) Tamil Nadu, whose talk on the ecology of Ridley's Sea Turtles was interesting and informative. The various steps being taken by the Tamil Nadu government to protect and propagate this species were also enumerated. Mr. Shanmuganathan was on a visit to Hyderabad and members met him at the Nehru Zoological Park guest house.

3. Besides the field trips, as is normal in summer, the Society met on 22-4-1983 for a film show, in which the following films (courtsey; A.P. Forest Dept.) were screened: a) In The Company of Birds, b) Natural History-I, c) Pelee National Park-Canada. On 23-5-1983, Mr. O.C. Edwards, an eminent nature-photographer, spoke to the members on the behaviour of birds - from personal experiences of over 40 years! Later, some of his excellent slides were also shown. Mr. B.C. Choudhury, a member, showed a few slides of the greater flamingoes, taken at Himayat Sagar in April, this year. The President of the Society, Mr. Pushp Kumar IFS, presented an audio-visual programme for the members on 27-6-1983, on National Parks of the world and their role in the safeguarding of the earth's natural history.

4. In a meeting on 8-5-1983, members elected the following as office-bearers of the Society:

President - Mr. Pushp Kumar IFS.
Vice Presidents - Mr. S. Ashok Kumar IAS.
Maj. Ahmed Abdul Aziz.
Hon. Secretary - Mr. Siraj A. Taher.
Hon. Treasurer - Mr. T.V.P. Sastry.
The office-bearers met on 16-5-1983 and the first Executive Committee of the Society was formed by nominations. The following members were nominated.

1-5 the office-bearers mentioned above.
6 Dr. N. Shivanarayan - Ornithologist, APAU.
7 Mr. N.G. Reddy.
8 Ms. K. Amruthalakshmi.
9 Mr. N. Shiva Kumar.
10 Mr. Aasheesh Pittie.
11 Chief Wildlife Warden, Government of A.P. - ex-officio member.

5. The Society has been formally registered with the Registrar of Public Societies, Government of Andhra Pradesh. It's Registration number being 1158.

6. Efforts to breed in captivity the Great Indian Bustard, an endangered species, have failed with the destruction of both the eggs, laid by the bird last month in Jodhpur zoo. The she bird refused to sit on the eggs for hatching right from the begining although it kept watching the eggs by moving around them. Later, attempts were made to hatch the eggs by using a hen as 'surrogate mother'. But the hen broke the first egg. The second egg also died unhatched.

-- THE HINDU 3-5-1983.

7. 500 Chukor eggs were received at Delhi from U.S.A. for artificial incubation and ultimate release of adult birds in Kashmir and the Himalayan region in their natural habitats, where their populations are dwindling. These eggs are from the progeny of the Chukors sent to U.S. zoos several years back when their numbers were large in their original habitats in India.

-- a T.V. news report 13-4-83

8. The first Siberian Crane bred through artificial insemination has fledged successfully at the International Crane Foundation in Wisconsin. There are 30 others in captivity around the world, someday destined to replenish the dwindling world population of around 150.

-- ORYX 16/4.

9. The outer covering of the Atlantic Puffin's (Fratercula arctica) bill is shed every year after breeding, a throwback on the reptilian origins of birds.

-- Arun Bhatia in Times of India 3-4-1983.

10. The nest of a sharpbill (Oxyruncus cristatus), until now thought to be extinct, has been discovered by ornithologists in eastern Brazil.

-- ORYX 16/4.

COMMENT:-

Ihave glanced over MAYURA Vol.4 No.1, quickly, and there are one or two items which may be worth recording in a more permanent form - say in the Bombay Journal:

1).There is a note by Dr.A.Shiv Raj on 'Community preening behaviour in Babblers'. This is certainly unusual and difficult to understand but it would be necessary to determine the identity of the babblers and also if possible of the snake. If the latter was a long thin one among trees and bushes, it was almost certainly a Whip Snake for a Green Pit Viper is unlikely to occur in that area. However, if it was found on the ground, it may have been one of several. By implication it appears that the birds pecked at the snake and have almost immediately preened themselves, indicating that they had taken something off the snake and applied it to their feathers.

I am not aware of any secretion between the scales of snakes but in any case if all these points are clarified, it might make a worthwhile note.

2).Another note by Aasheesh Pittie, on the nesting of birds (p.8) refers to the Streaked Bayas' nesting activities being in full swing on 20th March.

Nidification (3:10) says 'the breeding season seems to be invariably from the start of the rains ie., mid June to middle of September,' while the Handbook says that 'it is very early July to September in peninsular India and from February in Kerala.'

This is very different breeding season from that recorded and if Mr.Pittie is sure of the identity of the bird and can add a few more details regarding the numbers etc.,it might make an interesting note.

The reproduction from the Hindu refers to the Night Heron as a Highly migratory bird. So far as I know this is resident in most parts of the world and migration,if any, would be very local. They may possibly roost in one place and nest in another.

On page 5 reference is made to (wild)rabbits. We have none in India - they are all hares !

-Humayun Abdulali -

14-7-370 BEGUM BAZAR
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MAYURA

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GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD (Choriotis nigriceps) MULTIPLYING IN ANDHRA PRADESH.

By:- K. Jaganmohan Rao, I.F.S., Field Director, Project Tiger, Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve.

Importance:- Out of 23 species of Bustards (Otididae) found in the world only 5 species are found in the Indian Sub-continent - 1) Great Indian Bustard (Choriotis nigriceps - Vigors), 2) Lesser Bustard (Otis tetrax), H3) Houbara Bustard (Chlamydotis undulata), 4) Lesser Florican (Spheotides indica) and 5) Bengal Florican (Eupodotis bengalensis). Out of these, Lesser Florican (Nemalinare in Telugu) and Great Indian Bustard - known locally as Hukna or Tuqdar (Hindi) and Batta Meka (Telugu) - are reported in Andhra Pradesh. The presence of Floricans is yet to be established, but Great Indian Bustards were located in Andhra Pradesh during 1982. Great Indian Bustard is now found only in the following places. Approximate number found in the area is shown in brackets.

1. Ghatigaon - 30 km. from Gwalior (M.P.) (5).
2. Fatehpur-kharicha - 65 km. from Shivpur (M.P.) (7).
3. Kundappur - 60 km. from Kota (Rajasthan) (12).
4. Karmala - Maharashtra State (10).
5. Sokalia village of Ajmer Dist. (Rajasthan) (54).
6. Jaisalmer and Barmar Dists. (Rajasthan) (500).
7. Nandikotkur Taluq (Andhra Pradesh) (13).
8. Ranibennur (Karnataka) (-).

The fact that they are listed in Appendix II of CITES and in IUCN Red Data Book amplifies the need for their protection and conservation. The factors playing against their survival are:

1) The grass field, which is their habitat, is over-run by cattle as well as the plough.
2) These heavy ground birds weighing 15-20 kgs., and measuring about 1 m. in height can be sighted easily in the depleted barren habitats where they are trying to adjust with the changed habitat conditions. It is so sorrowful that even small bushes near which they roost are not spared and they are forced to be on the wings, mostly over an extensive area, for their food.
3) Being a shy bird it takes off when disturbed, leaving uncovered, its only egg. (It lays only 1 egg a season.) This one egg also, is destroyed by predators including man, most of the times. Because the hen has the habit of giving peculiar calls during hatching of the egg, she attracts the attention of predators. The eggs, laid in open areas, are often trampled by cattle.

Description:- The Great Indian Bustard is a very heavy ground bird, like a young Ostrich, Deep buff above, finely vermiculated with black and white below, a broad black gorget on lower breast and conspicuous black crested crown. In flight, the white outstretched neck and underparts, black crown, gorget, and a large whitish patch near tip of wings are prominent. Sexes alike but female is smaller in size and does not have so prominent a pectoral band (Dr. Salim Ali).

Habitat:- Southern dry thorn type of forest interspersed with cereal crops, cotton and castor. In Andhra Pradesh these birds were located on 24th August, 1982 by wildlife officials of A.P.Forest Dept., near Rollapadu village, 19kms. from Nandikotkur town in Kurnool Revenue Dist. After a prolonged investigation their sightings were reported from 18 villages of Nandikotkur Tahsil. Their movements are seasonal and stray. But they are mainly residents of 2 areas. Recently near Rollapadu village 10 birds were sighted. About 1600 ha. (4000 acs.) of continuous stretch of Government waste land called locally as "Barkalu" in-between Rollapadu, Suneesula, Cherukucherla and Alaganur villages is the main roosting ground for these birds. The rainfall in the area is hardly 500 mm. per annum. Soils are gritty, stony, shallow and unfit for continuous cultivation. Terrain is rolling and undulating with eroded skeletal soils. Three seasonal streams in the area with phoenix (Eeta) and Tadvad (Tangedu) bushes are harbouring these birds round the year. Talamudipi tank in the area (contains water even in summer) is also a source of water for the birds. Thus it is a congenial habitat for these birds.

Behaviour:- They are basically insectivorous and feed on locusts, grass-hoppers, centipedes and lizards. They graze with head down, in the fields, like goats, and hence the name in Telugu. Walk briskly when approached to a distance of 100 m. and hide in bushes, peeping occassionally with outstretched necks. When approached further, take to wing with a strutting display of wings. They forage throughout day and rest in the night. Breeding season is not defined. At Rollapadu one nest was located on 4-12-1982 and another on 14-1-1983. Eggs are reported to have been collected in summer also, in the past. Birds are seen more in number after rains and in summer they are scattered all over the areas. Still the correct reading of population dynamics of this species is not made.

Protection Measures:- Recently a colonisation scheme has been started in this habitat by the government. The Dist. Collector, Kurnool, has been requested to help in the protection of these birds. He agreed to withdraw the irritant

factors from the scheme and help the birds to propagate. The following measures are being taken by the Wildlife Wing of Forest Dept. to preserve and conserve these birds.

1) Local villagers are educated about the importance of protecting these birds. Village elders are persuaded to infuse the spirit of adoption of these birds in the villagers. Particularly, they are convinced of the need to protect the nests and to inform the sighting of birds and nests to the Wildlife Watchers for pursuing protection and preservation.
2) The resident villagers are engaged as watchers and two more shikaris who once poached these birds are employed to protect the birds and to have a vigil on their movements.
3) Local police officers and Revenue officials are encouraged to protect the birds through the Dist. Collector, Kurnool.
4) The movement range of these birds is being investigated to study the birds. Effort is also made to confirm the presence of these birds in Vikarabad and Shambshabad areas of Hyderabad Dist. and Tandur, Kollapur and Jatprole areas of Mahbubnagar Dist. which were the habitats of these birds once.
5) Government lands are being exclusively taken to protect foraging grounds and nesting sites.
6) Proposals to compensate farmers of the fields where eggs are laid are made and watchers are kept near each nest to protect them from predators.
7) To rehabilitate the Bustard, Andhra Pradesh State Govt. sanctioned Rs 20,000/- during 1983-84 and a scheme for Rs 2 lakhs is being submitted to Govt. of India for sanction.
8) Top officers of the Forest Dept. of A.P. frequently visit the area to check the birds and the protection efforts.

The number of birds, when the department took up their protection, in August 1982 was hardly 3 and now the number has grown to 13. We can now confidently say that the Great Indian Bustards are multiplying in Nandikotkur Tahsil under the caring control of the Wildlife Wing of Andhra Pradesh Forest Department.

" A British observer noticed for several years that swifts regularly hunted round his bee-hives. Thinking that they must catch a great many bees, he at intervals shot a swift, eventually collecting 8. When he dissected them, he found that they had eaten only the drones, which are, of course, both harmless to the swift as they are stingless and valueless to the bee-keeper as they do not make honey. If, as seems likely, the swift hunts at a speed of about 25mph, it can see its prey only a short time before catching it, and it can distinguish drones from worker bees. The incident also shows how careful one must be in deciding whether a bird is harmful."

-- David Lack in 'Swifts In A Tower.'

SURVEY OF THE BIRDS OF ANDHRA PRADESH - 10.

By:- Pushp Kumar.

HARRIERS:-

These sleek, longlegged, longtailed, birds of prey are migrants to the State. Aptly named, they are seen in most parts of the State harrying their prey (eg. small birds, rodents, insects, lizards, grass-hoppers, locusts, etc.), as they skim the grasslands, meadows and marshes; twisting, turning, rising, diving but never, seemingly, giving up till they have harried and flushed their prey into the open. They seize it as it scurries from cover to cover in the low bushes and grass, using their long legs to advantage. Among raptors the Harriers are distinctive in that they have a ruff of short feathers around their rounded heads. This is especially so in females and young in which it is dintinctly marked. Its role is not well understood but is believed to help in audio-location of its prey in the dense grassy or marshy habitat.

Harriers are often seen solitary or in pairs. However, a congregation of over twenty birds was seen in the Rollapadu fields (Kurnool Dist.), consisting of males, females and young, sitting on the fallow fields, picking up grass-hoppers (?) and insects. They often arrive in the State in August-September and remain till March. One straggler (?) was seen in June 1983 in the Rollapadu area in the Bustard habitat, flying around over fallow fields.

Of the (6) species of Harriers, 5 species are reported from the Indian Sub-continent. Of these, 4 species visit the state.

PALE HARRIER Circus macrourus (S.G. Gmelin).

Telugu: Pilli gadda, Tella chappa gadda.
Urdu: Girgitmar, Dastmal.

This sleek, pale-grey (pallid) bird (male) is usually seen in the State from August-September to about March. Affects fallow fields, grasslands, meadows and scrub country throughout the State. In the field, females and juveniles are seen earlier in the season and more in number than males. However, separation from females and juveniles of Mongagu's harrier is difficult.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER Circus pygargus (Linnaeus).

Telugu: Pilli gedda, Neela gedda (?).
Urdu: Ooda girgitmar (?).

This bird is very similar to the Pale Harrier, but on close scrutiny through binoculars can be seen to be much darker grey and bluish (male), with its distinctive black trans-

verse wing-bar across the secondaries. This is seen much more commonly in the State than the Pale Harrier. It is seen over the entire state over grasslands, meadows, fallow fiedds and reservoirs.

PIED HARRIER Circus melanoleucos (Pennant).

Telugu: (?) Urdu: (?)

A winter migrant. This handsome black and white harrier occurs patchily in the State. One bird was brought from Nizamabad to the Nehru Zoological Park. Another was seen south of Nellore over foreshore of a tank off the National Highway. Another was observed feeding on a quail (Rain Quail?) on the foreshore of the large tank of Nelapattu Sanctuary in Nellore Dist. One was observed on the Bombay Highway, on the road to Manjira Sanctuary near Sangareddy, alongwith the Birdwatchers' Society. Also reported in the Handbook as seen in the Warangal District. One specimen also observed near Rajahmundry, off the road to Rampachodavaram and the Eastern Ghats.

MARSH HARRIER Circus aeruginosus aeruginosus (Linnaeus).

Telugu: Tella tala pilli gedda (?). Urdu: Safed Sir.

Perhaps the most commonly seen harrier throughout the State, specially over marshes and reed beds, be it the water birds sanctuary in the N.Z.P., the Yenkrial tank near Hyderabad or the Pulicat Lake in Nellore Dist. Also a common flusher of hordes of Jacanas, coots, moorhens, cotton teals, etc., in the Kolleru. Females are seen more often than males! Is it perhaps, because, juveniles also look like females! This harrier is also seen more often on the ground, on promontories and grass banks of tanks.

SERPENT EAGLES:-

This peculiar group of the birds of prey are termed Serpent Eagles by some authorities. This is perhaps so because of their habit of catching and eating snakes! Though it must be said that snakes are not the only food they take! They also take frogs, lizards, rats and birds. They are perhaps termed eagles by association! On the Sub-continent only 2 species are listed, though the Crested Serpent Eagle has as many as 4 species. In Andhra Pradesh two species and two forms occur. Both are resident and generally well distributed.

SHORT-TOED EAGLE Circaetus gallicus gallicus (Gmelin).

Telugu: Pamula gedda. Urdu: Sampmar.

Resident. Patchily distributed in the open forest areas of the State. A nest of this bird was discovered in the Mahavir Harina Vanasthali near Hyderabad. It was placed

about 20' above ground level in the fork of a Moduga (Butea monosperma) tree, in the middle of the Vanasthali. When the Bird Watcher's Society visited the Vanasthali on 23.2.1982, a downy chick (white) could be seen in the nest. The parents were seen soaring above. The white fledgling could be seen clearly in the nest of sticks and twigs. This bird remained at the nest and grew up in the Vanasthali. The parent birds were not seen thereafter. There was no nesting in 1982 season. However, one solitary bird (the juvenile?) could be seen soaring around and perching on the same tree. In 1983 the same nest was used and another young raised. Do these birds nest in alternate years? This is also the first known nesting of this bird in this area, and for Vanasthali a welcome indication of the restoration of the habitat. This bird was also observed in the Eastern Ghats (Chintapalli) and at Mannanur in the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Sanctuary area.

PENINSULAR CRESTED SERPENT EAGLE Spilornis cheela melanotis (Jerdon).

Telugu: Nalla pamula gedda. Urdu: Kala sampmar.

Resident and fairly widespread in wooded areas throughout the State. Seen often in the N.Z.P. One specimen seen in the forest nursery near Rajendranagar. Also seen at Mannanur in Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Sanctuary, near Maredumilli in the Eastern Ghats, in Pocharam Sanctuary, Pakhal, Eturnagaram, etc. One juvenile (whitish below, brown above with a distinct Serpent Eagle crest) was brought to the N.Z.P. recently. This was apparently caught in the outskirts of Hyderabad city.

OSPREY:-

This interesting bird of prey is often assigned a different family altogether viz., Pandionidae, due to some of its distinguishing characteristics. Only one species is listed world-wide with a number of sub-species. In India only one sub-species is reported. In the State also the same is reported.

OSPREY Pandion haliaetus haliaetus (Linnaeus).

Telugu: Koramen gadda. Urdu: Machlimar.

Seen mostly during winter over lakes and tanks in most parts of the State. Seen on Pakhal Lake, Himayatsagar (once), Nagarjunasagar - where it perches on dead trees left in the upstream portions of the reservoir. Keeps flying off in front of the launch, flies overhead and returns to its perch. Seen also on Pulicat Lake in Nellore Dist. and on Kolleru. Its white underside and characteristic hovering flight as it searches for fish in the waters below, is seen over a number of reservoirs.

RECORDING OF FIRST AND LAST SIGHTINGS OF ANNUAL MIGRANTS IN AND AROUND HYDERABAD, WITH NOTES ON GENERAL DISTRIBUTION:-1

By:- Aasheesh Pittie, 14-7-370 Begum Bazar, Hyderabad-12.

I Anatidae:-

A number of migratory birds visit Hyderabad in winter every year. Its location, between northern and southern India is important not only from the point of view of geographic distribution of various species, but also as a transit station for migrants which travel further south. If bird-watchers can keep a log of first sightings and last sightings of such migrants, we may be able to draw a good picture of the extent of migration and also the time taken by various species to travel from one place to another. It is with this primary aim, that this article has been written.

What follows is not a compilation of the arrival and departure dates of wintering duck, but the dates on which I first saw them in a season and the dates on which they were last seen when a season was nearing its end. A point to be noted is that first and last dates for a species, may not be for the same season. This has been done, to emphasise the earliest and latest dates of migrating duck (according to my records) - eventhough a study relating the arrival and departure dates in various years, to possible causes (eg. climate, etc.) for any significant variations in such dates, would be interesting! All data in this note are based on observations recorded for the winter seasons of 1980-81, 1981-82 and 1982-83.

Most of the observations were made within a study area of approximately 70 km. radius around Hyderabad city. A majority of the lakes if not all, were visited with the Bird-watcher's Society of Andhra Pradesh, on its fortnightly field trips. Since geographic distribution plays a major part in migration, it would not be amiss here to define some geographical regions used in the text.

Palaearctic Region: Eurasia above the tropics with the northwestern corner of Africa.
Nearctic Region: North America, except the tropical part of Mexico.
Ethiopian Region: Africa, except the northwestern corner, with part of southern Arabia.
Oriental Region: Tropical Asia with associated continental islands.
Holarctic Region: The Palaearctic and Nearctic regions together are called the Holarctic region.

1. BRAHMINY DUCK Tadorna ferruginea (Pallas).

Breeds in the southern parts of the Palaearctic realm, roughly with Lat. 30°N and Lat. 60°N, from SE Europe toSW

China. In the Sub-continent, it breeds in Lad.. and Tibet, chiefly in May-June. Winters in the Oriental realm upto China. Though it winters throughout India, it is rare in southern India and a rare straggler to Sri Lanka. Ali & Ripley (1978) state that this bird arrives in India c. Oct/Nov and departs by mid-April. For A.P., Pushp Kumar (1982) states "arriving in late Nov. and departing in Apr."

First Date: 7th November. Place: Palmakol.
Last Date: 27th March. Place: Himayat Sagar.

2. PINTAIL Anas acuta

This is an extremely widespread dabbling duck, breeding in the Holoarctic regions and wintering in the north-eastern Ethiopian, southern Palaearctic and Oriental realms. In the Sub-continent, it is common and widely distributed, arriving in NW India in September. By mid-November, it has spread east and south in the continent. According to Ali & Ripley (1978) it is mostly gone by March end. Pushp Kumar (1982) says they depart from A.P. by end April. They have been known to arrive as early as Sept. in Sri Lanka. The birds which migrate in India, originate chiefly from the Caspian region and Siberia. The flight speed of a chased Pintail has been clocked at 104 kmph!

First Date: 7th November. Place: Palmakol.
Last Date: 14th February. Place: Patancheru.

3. COMMON TEAL Anas crecca crecca Linnaeus.

Another very common and abundant migrant to the Sub-continent. Arrives very early by mid or end August, the numbers gradually building up and by November, the birds are fairly well spread out. The Common Teal is a holarctic species, wintering south of this range from southern North America, north Africa to southern China and the Phillipines. Most birds are gone by end March. Pushp Kumar (1982) reports arrival in October and departure by late April, in A.P. An interesting point about this species is that it leaves its breeding grounds before the post-nuptial moult, and sheds its quills after it reaches the winter quarters. In the process, it becomes completely flightless for some time.

First Date: 7th November. Place: Palmakol.
Last Date: 13th February. Place: Shamirpet.

4. GADWAL Anas strepera strepera Linnaeus.

Another holarctic species, wintering south of its breeding range, from northern Africa, Ethiopia to S China. A very common wintering duck in northern India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, it becomes rarer in the south. There is only one record from Sri Lanka. Both Ali & Ripley (1978) and Pushp Kumar (1982) do not mention the approximate arrival and de-

parture dates.

First Date: 31st October. Place: Patancheru.
Last Date: 8th February. Place: Miralam Tank.

5. WIGEON Anas penelope Linnaeus.

This duck breeds in the Palaearctic realm, wintering in Europe, Africa and Asia. Though it is common in northern Inida, its numbers gradually lessen in Peninsular and eastern India. Records from Sri Lanka are sparce and irregular. Neither Ali & Ripley (1978) nor Pushp Kumar (1982) mention migratory months.

First Date: 29th November. Place: Manjira Reservoir.
Last Date: 6th February. Place: Manjira Reserviir.

6. GARGANEY Anas querquedula Linnaeus.

This Palaearctic species is a very common winter visitor to the Sub-continent, and perhaps also the earliest. Migration is evident in August in NW India and by September the birds are well distributed across the continent. It leaves later than the other ducks, lingering on till May. Pushp Kumar (1982) states that in A.P. birds arrive in September and may be seen till early May. Though most birds migrate from northern Asia into India and vice versa, two aberrant records have come to light of a bird (ringed in Bharatpur) caught in Italy c. 7600 km. WNW, and another bird (ringed in Tamil Nadu) captured in Nigeria c. 7700 km. almost due west (Ali & Ripley 1978)!

First Date: 31st October. Place: Patancheru.
Last Date: 8th May. Place: Shamirpet.

7. COMMON POCHARD Aythya ferina (Linnaeus).

A Palaearctic breeder, wintering from the Nile Valley, to Burma and S China. This species arrives in NW India by mid October. It is common in Pakistan and NW India, numbers decreasing across the continent, towards the east. Also decreasing southwards in the Peninsula; not recorded further south than Mysore. Absent in Sri Lanka. According to Ali & Ripley (1978) it leaves India by end March.

First Date: 5th December. Place: Shamirpet.
Last Date: 14th February. Place: Patancheru.

8. TUFTED DUCK Aythya fuligula (Linnaeus).

A wide ranging Palaearctic breeder, it winters south of this range from Nile valley to S. China. Arriving in India by mid-October, it departs by end March - Ali & Ripley (1978). It is common in W. Pakistan and N. India, but numbers decrease in the Deccan and further south to Mysore. Rare in Sri Lanka.

First Date: 9th November. Place: Shamshabad.
Last Date: 6th February. Place: Manjira.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:- I thank Capt. N.S. Tyabji for his valuable suggestions and advice and constant encouragement.

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CHANGES IN THE HABITAT AND BIRD LIFE OF BANJARA HILLS.

By:- Siraj A. Taher, 6-3-249/3, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad - 34.

Banjara Hills - THE very name conjures up images of a wild place, natural and undisturbed. When I first moved into this area some 20 years back, it was definitely not a wild place even though city folk were hesitant to venture here after sunset. It was nevertheless a serene area, comparatively unaffected by the ravages of man. The natural rock formations, which are mostly granite, gave a beautiful effect to the topography of the whole area and were largely undisturbed. Here the gentry of yore had built for themselves, residences with sprawling grounds filled with shady and fruit-bearing trees. The gardens, both big and small, were well laid out on the undulating ground with ponds, hedges and creepers, giving the whole place a green look. Some places even had a spot or two of the natural vegetation left undisturbed. Besides these man-made havens, there were a couple of small springs forming marshes, full of reeds, lichens and algae, which flowed both over the ground and at places underground and drained into 'nullahs' or streams. Two beautiful lakes, one perenial and the other seasonal and marshy, besides another small tank known popularly as the 'Singada Tank', lent a cool and picturesque effect to the surroundings. Two or three valleys, covered with natural vegetation, mostly bushes, scrub and a few trees added to the beauty of the whole area. The few rocky and undulating plains with short grass and scrub lent their support as 'meadows', to the place. At some places in one of the valleys, rice was grown and the water from the springs was used for cultivation in another spot. This completed the picture of a serene and lovely surrounding with near-natural habitats of 'wetlands', 'scrubland', 'meadows and plains' and 'gardens and glades'. So then, this was the Banjara Hills of the early 60's as I found it to be.

Eventhough I was not a serious birdwatcher then and could not differentiate one species from another, I could still identify several of the common birds, or at least those well known varieties of the game-bag. This is the reason why I have mentioned the Urdu names (in brackets) of these birds as known in Hyderabad, alongwith the common English names. Having been interested in nature and wildlife from a long time, I searched for and found an abundance of both variety and numbers in the bird life of Banjara Hills during my morning walks and late evening strolls.

Grey Partridge (Teetar), Painted Partridge (Kakera) and Quails (Bater) could be seen and heard in abundance and so also Green Pigeons (Harial). While a few stray ducks were regularly visiting at least one of the marsh-tanks. Moorhens (Pun Murghi) were sure sightings in these ponds as well as the reeds in the spring ponds.

The mornings started with the sounds of the Crows, Sparrows (Khan Chudi), the Koel or the Bulbul and as the day progressed, Bee Eaters (Makhi Mar) were seen in good numbers hawking insects from their look-outs on the electric wires. The cooing of the Doves (Faqta) added to the chorus of the chirping sparrows and flowerpeckers (Phul Sungni). The afternoon saw the advent of the Hoopoe (Hudhud) alongwith the Robins (Kali Chudi) and the Wagtails (Dhoban) into the gardens. The evenings again brought out the birds especially the sparrows, the Sunbirds (Phul Sungni) and the doves for their foraging, and the night came alive with the chatter of the Owlets (Chaqwa-chaqwi) and occasionally by the call of the Nightjars (Shaikh Fareed). As one went round watering the garden in the mornings, the robin or the wagtail regularly followed behind, looking for insects in the softened ground. The march ponds were full of Dabchick (Pun Dubbi), Cormorants (Pun Kawwa), Egrets (all known as Bagla), Pond Heron (Konga) and Jacanas (Pun Tota) as also the Kingfishers (machli Mar). In the plains and rocky areas I could see Drongos (Zulfiqar), Larks (Chandul), Swallows and Swifts (both called Ababeel). Vultures & Kites could also be seen, and not being able to differentiate between the species, I classified them as Vultures (Gidh) and Eagles or Kites (Cheel). Occasionally a Shikra was also noted. The other varieties of birds I used to see then, in fairly large numbers, but do not see now, or at least not so often or in such large numbers are as follows: Blue Jay (Sabzak), Sandgrouse (Bhat Teetar), Crow Pheasant (Mahoka), Rosy Pastor (Tilyer), Parakeets (Tota), Crows (Kawwa), Coppersmiths (Chakki Takara), Magpie-Robin, Munias, Orioles (Peelak) and Ducks (mostly Teals or Spotbills). There were several other varieties of birds, but not being as conversant with them THEN as I am now, identification of even the families was not possible. Thinking back now, I feel these might have been the Warblers (Piddi), the Reed Warblers (Podna), Flowerpeckers, Rock Thrushes & Chats.

Hoopoes used to nest in a hole in the wall of a shed in my house regularly for 4-5 years. Other nests that were observed were those of the Sunbirds, Bulbul, Kites, Tailor Bird (Darzan), and Partridges & Quails.

Alas! All this has changed. The whole topography of Banjara Hills is different now. With the influx of people, extensive rock breaking & construction activity not only destroyed the serenity & Solitude of the place but has resulted in a lot of damage to the vegetation & habitat. Deprived of free & natural flow of rain water through the several channels, nullahs, and also down the slopes of the valleys & undulating lands, the lakes & ponds have shrunk in size and have also been polluted. Due to the blocking up of several areas by the levelling the ground, road development, etc. some of the springs as well as the seasonal streams have completely dried up. Trees, bushes & scrub have been indiscriminately removed and the bigger compoumdsbroken up into smaller plots. Even though a lot of small, neat and well manicured gardens have come up in the newly built houses, these are not conducive to bird life. Some of the birds are trying to adapt themselves to the changed environment & occasionally do visit the gardens, especially where there is a small pond or a patch of ground which has been neglected & is full of fallen leaves & wild growth. The hedges & creepers are also used by the birds a great deal. Some of these birds are the Robins, Redstarts, Wagtails, Babblers (Saat Bahen), Kools & Cuckoos. Occasionally I see a Hoopoe, a Kingfisher or a Shikra, but it is there one moment & gone the next.

The birds which are NOT seen any more are the Green Pigeons, Rosy Pastors, Sandgrouse & Nightjars. Partridges have declined in number considerably even though one can still hear an occasional bird when walking about in the interior areas of Banjara. Now when I know a little more about birds, I feel as if I am seeing more birds than before. This is only an illusion. A lot of water birds including the ducks are not seen any more. Most of the nesting activity is not noticeable except of the Sunbirds, Bulbuls, Doves, Sparrows, Tailor birds & Robins. Bee-eaters, Swallows & Swifts, Rollers and Munias are seldom seen. One aspect which is quite noticeable is the reduction in the number of birds seen. Sighting or hearing dozens of birds was not uncommon even in the late 60's and early 70's, which today is reduced to a stray sighting. Dabchicks, Egrets, Pond Herons, Kingfishers and Lapwings may still be seen but in far smaller numbers than a decade back. Pollution of the lakes & reduction in the water draining into them & the resultant effect on the natural growth of marshes, reeds, moss & lichens seems to be responsible for this. Arid land birds have considerably decreased owing to the destruction of their habitats. Arboreal birds are there but mostly those which are seed-eaters, nectar feeders or frugivorous ones. These include the Oriole, Doves, Sunbirds, Flowerpeckers, Tailor Bird, Sparrows & Crows and insectivorous varieties like the Babblers and Redstart.

Fruit-bearing and shady trees, bushes, scrub and grassy areas have given way to concrete monoliths & paved roads. The charm and beauty, the cool and serene surroundings and the salubrious climate of the place has been completely destroyed. What used to be a place with richly endowed habitat and typical pockets for different varieties of the avifauna is today a place just like any other place in any city. The developers and colonizers may no doubt be feeling happy at the tremendous growth of Banjara Hills, with beautiful and large buildings and having a breath-taking view from the terraces and beautiful gardens -- but then the naturalist and nature lover's will say -- AT WHAT COST!

NOTE:

Average height of Banjara Hills - 540 metres above m.s.l.

Temperature -- Lower by at least 3-4°C, especially at night, when compared to the main city.

Location - Western side of Hyderabad city - A residential suburb.

" Bird songs are more than a collection of aesthetically pleasing sounds that we enjoy each spring. It is a fundamentally important means by which birds transmit information to one another. The songs we hear are the result of particular breeding season social systems and the kinds of habitat in which birds live. The characteristics of the songs of each species have been moulded by the need to communicate different kinds and amounts of information over different distances in different habitats. Fortunately for us, the sounds that serve song birds best in spring have characteristics that we find most pleasing to the ear."

-- James L.Gallidge in "Sounds we call Songs"

-- Living Bird Quarterly - Vol.2-No.2 Spring 1983

" The largest number of meals brought to one brood in a day (by a swift) was 42, so that the parents probably took about 50 gms.(1¾th ozs.) of insects for their young, in addition to whatever they ate themselves. Each meal usually contains between 300-1000 small insects & spiders, but a few meals with large insects have contained only 100, while others with very small insects have had upto 1500 individuals. The swifts which collected 42 meals in a day probably removed about 20,000 insects in so doing."

--- David Lack in 'Swifts in a Tower.'--

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MISCELLANEOUS NOTES:-

I - Night Herons (Nycticorax nycticorax) in my Garden

By; Major Ahmed Abdul Aziz.

My house is situated in a fairly crowded locality of Hyderabad City, Sultanpura. But it has a huge ground & a good number of large old trees of Mango, Coconut, Jamun, Peepul, and several others. These provide a good roosting place for several varieties of birds especially the crows, mynas, pigeons & the like. But the 15th of March was a different day for me. On that day, I heard the continuous caving of crows amongst the trees. When I came out of my room to investigate the reason for this commotion, which was around a Jamun tree, I was thrilled to see that there were a few Night Herons sitting on the tree & the crows were bothering them. I watched them from time to time throughout the day. At about 6.45 p.m. I saw that they flew around the trees for a while and I was surprised to see that there were several more of these night herons on the mango trees, which joined them in the flying. After a while all of them, about 25, flew towards river Musi, which is to the north of my house.

The ext morning at 6.00 a.m. the birds had not yet returned to their roosts but when again I looked at 7.00 a.m., they had come back. The rest of the day I heard their calls, (mostly when the crows were bothering them) which sounded like --- 'wak, wak'; at other times the birds were silent.

I watched them daily for a few days but could not do so between 24th March & 2nd April,83. From 3rd April I have been seeing them regularly and find that they leave their roost sometime between 6-30 p.m. & 6.45 p.m. and fly towards the river Musi to return the next morning punctually between 6.30 a.m. and 7.00 a.m. This routine has been continuing even now i.e., 22nd May,1983.

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II - Andhra Pradesh Joins in Crane Group

By:- K. Jaganmohan Rao, I.F.S., Field Director, Project Tiger, Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve.

Mr.Varaprasad, Range Officer, Wildlife, and myself visited Rollapadu Village about 20 kilometers from Nandikotkur town in Kurnool Revenue District in the first week of March,1983 in the quest of Great Indian Bustard. For three days we perambulated the villages near-by. On 4.3.1983 near Cherukucherla village we sighted a group of around 200 birds in flight, making beautiful whorls and moving forward in a broad 'V' formation with their neck & legs fully extended. On local enquiry we were told that they are called "Kora kanchulu" in Telugu. Their formation revealed them to be cranes. We saw them descending slowly to the ground ahead. We followed and

saw them land near Talamudipi Tank. It was 6.00 p.m. and we approached them cautiously on foot, moving behind bushes. My suspicion about their identity proved to be correct. They were "Demoiselle Cranes (Anthropoides virgo (Linnaeus)" known as Karkara, Koonj (H) and Korakancha (T). We checked the description given by Dr.Salim Ali, which tallied completely. A dainty little grey crane with black head and neck. Feathers of lower neck long and falling over breast. Conspicuous white ear-tufts, behind eyes. Their loud, musical trumpeting with their "Kurr,Kurr" calls like a musical symphoney, could be heard very clearly. Since we had seen these birds in Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad, there was no doubt whatsoever about the identity. Thus we report that the Demoiselle Crane a visitor to Andhra Pradesh also. They are reported to be seen after Sankranthi (January) Festival every year in these areas but do not halt for long here.

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III - On Feeding Behabiour of Crow Pheasant (Centropus sinensis)

By; B.C.Choudhury

In January 1979, I observed the Crow-pheasants (Centropus sinensis or is it C. bengalensis)++ and Rhesus monkeys (Macaca mulatta) together, on the exposed lowtide mudflats of Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary in Orissa. This association was for the short duration of tidal changes. During the week-long observation that followed, I found the monkeys and crow-pheasants tolerant of each other as long as they were feeding on the mudflats. The Crow-pheasants were busy feeding on grasshoppers and mudskippers (the stalkeyed fish one so commonly comes across on the mangrove mudflats) and the monkeys on fallen mangrove fruits, fiddler crabs and perhaps some insects as well. But, once they returned to the shoreline thick vegetations, on submergence of the mudflats, at hightide, teapers flew at large and each tried to dislodge to other to a less advantageous position.

Thus began my observations on the feeding behaviour of Crow-pheasants. However, seldom could I approach an unsuspecting one on the ground, close enough, to ascertain what is in its beak, before its color and the thick foliage sanctuary it sought, became one.

++ Hugh Whisler in his book "Popular Handbook of Indian Birds" (1963 fourth edition, Revised by Norman B.Kinncar) writes " A much smaller species, the Lesser Coucal (Centropus bengalensis) is found in the Himalayan terai, in Orissa and Bengal and South Western India. While the adult resembles the Crow-pheasant in coloration, the immature plumage with brown and white streaking, is very different."

It was not until the rains and winter of 1981, and I was becoming more interested in keeping Chameleons (Chameleo zeylonicus) in open moated enclosures of Nehru Zoological Park that I could catch coucals in the act of feeding. My meticulous record of each newly arrived Chameleon into the enclosure and its subsequent absence, found the keeper of the area explaining many a time that he too is at a loss to know what is happening to the Chameleons. I intensified my observation and spent more time both during the early morning and late evenings, near the enclosure. I found two to four coucals regularly visiting the enclosure during these hours. In the next fifteen to twenty days I found at least 10 to 12 chameleons falling victim to the coucals! Their 'modus operandi' was to descend down to the ground of the enclosure first, gradually moving into the branches. When they flew out one could very clearly see the prehensile tail and the large head of the green chameleon drooping on either side of the strong beak of the coucal. As winter progressed and the number of chameleons in the wild decreased, there remained only a couple of chameleons (usually very large in size and perhaps, the coucals found them impossible to handle) in the enclosure and the coucals shifted their attention to some other prey. This has been happening every year and the zoo is now planning to design a predator-proof enclosure to exhibit chameleons.

It is not just chameleons of the area that fall prey to coucals. Even the Garden Lizards (Calotes versicolor) the zoo provides as food to green whipsnakes, water snakes and rat snakes, are eaten by coucals. Perhaps, the chameleons and the garden lizards do not find means to hide themselves from their predators in the controlled vegetation inside the enclosures.

It is rather easy to watch coucals feeding on grasshoppers and other insects from the overgrown grass just after the rains. During the 1982 and 1983 rains I have observed the coucals feeding on grasshoppers, catterpillars and perhaps also on skinks. Though I have never seen coucals feeding on snakes (they are reported to feed) they may turn out to be the culprits of all the missing small snakes from the open snake enclosures at the zoo!

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IV - The Nest Of The Baya Weaver-Bird (Ploceus philippinus) Architect Supreme.

By; O.C. Edwards

I mentioned in my article "The Tailor-bird's Nest" (Mayura Apr. - June 83) that I would say something about the nest of Ploceus philippinus, so here it is.

The handsome retort-shaped nests are a familiar sight in our country, seen hanging from the outer boughs of the Babul, date-palm and other trees, the colony consisting of from 12 to 50 or more nests. The birds prefer cultivation to jungle, and the nests are either over water or near it.

Regarding the material used Hugh Whistler writes: " The nests are built of strips of sarpat grass, rice grass, plantain leaf, coir, jawar leaf or coco-nut fronds. These strips, the bird prepares for itself by cutting a notch in the side of a blade of grass and tearing off the strip above it, a foot or two long." I have seen the birds around Hyderabad doing this with the fronds of the date-palm. They bring one or more strands in their beaks and begin at the end of the chosen bough. Again to Whistler."The construction of the nest has often been described, but Mr. (Dr.) Salim Ali appears to be the first observer who correctly unravelled the economy of a breeding colony. According to his account, the colony is founded by a number of adult males in breeding condition but still unmated. Each bird selects a suitable twig and winds a number of strands about it until a firm support for the intended nest is secured. From this descends a mass of strips which are worked up into a pendant loop to form the skeleton of the structure. Porches are built over the upper part on each side, one developing and broadening out later into the egg chamber, the other which is not so bulgy being produced into the entrance tube. About the time the egg-chambers are complete hen-birds begin to arrive in the colony and though the various cocks press their attention on them it appears that each hen deliberately makes choice amongst the nests, accepting later the cock whose nest has pleased her fancy. Henceforth the female occupies herself with making the interior of the nest to her liking while the male completes the entrance tunnel. The egg chamber is left unlined, but small pellets of mud are often worked into the walls, a habit of which the original significance, if any, appears to be lost. .Assoon as the nest is completed, the eggs laid and incubation started by the hen, the cock proceeds to build a second nest which in due course is chosen by another prospecting female, and the whole process is repeated till she too is safely on her eggs. If circumstances are favourable a third hen may be similarly provided for.

It will be seen that this account explains the fact, often recorded, that males are considerably in excess of females in the colonies, and also accounts for the unfinished 'cock-nests' second or third nests abandoned by males in which the reproductive fervour is waning".

It would be interesting to discover the real reason for the pellets of clay mentioned above. Perhaps they are used as protection against sharp and stiff points of fibres which refuse to be tucked into the walls of the nest, or as cement to bind loosely knit strands.

Another interesting phenomenon is the fact that fairly often fireflies are found adhering to the pellets. There is a pretty fancy among some that the bird likes to have light inside the nest. It is more likely that the bird is attracted to the insect's on-and-off light and uses it as a decoration in much the same manner as the Bower-bird which adorns the front of its bower with small brightly coloured objects.

I have watched a male which was either to lazy to make its own strands or was a born thief. It was stealing strands from a partly built nest. The rightful owner had to keep driving it off.

Does instinct sometimes misfire or reason fail? I once took a photograph of a nest that was not attached to a bough but was attached to the inside of another partly built nest, and also a photograph of what was nothing more than a tube 3 inches in diameter and more than 2 feet in length. The bird seemed to know how to make a tube and nothing more.

To appreciate fully the skill and technique of the Baya one must watch the whole process of nest-building. Showmen often train the bird to thread beads to make a necklace, holding the needle in its beak.

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V - Nesting Activities Of Birds In a House Garden

By; Humayun Taher

As the old saying goes, 'a clean garden never attracts birds', so it is with my uncle's garden. It is a wild, yet inviting and interesting place where many birds nest regularly throughout the year. Some of these birds are, the tailor bird, the Indian Robin, both species of Sunbirds, (The Purple and Purple Rumped) etc.

My uncle is a keen gardener. His house is situated on Banjara Hills and has all sorts of trees, bushes, flowers and even a pondful of reeds and lilies in the garden. The back yard (of the house) has a wild lime tree under which dry flowers and leaves are always fluttering about. This attracts insects, which in turn attract birds. The lily pond, which is full of fish, attracts the pond Heron and the White Breasted Kingfisher. The Robin and Iora are always around.

On a fine day, the 18th June,83 when my father and I went to the house, we saw signs of a Tailor Bird starting to build a nest in a creeper. The nest which was made out of a single leaf, was hardly six inches from the ground and was quite near the garden path. We asked uncle to keep an eye on the nest and to keep us informed.

On the 20th of the same month we received news that the nest was completed. Since I had to go to school, my father went to see it. Later he told me that the nest was ready and the eggs could be expected within a few days. But for some (unknown) reason, no eggs were laid, and the nest was empty when we saw it on the 23rd. I went to have a careful look. at the nest and saw that it was lined with coconut fibres, some soft downy material and surprisingly, even a few strands of human hair. The nest opening was shaded by a leaf.

Since my dad was busy and I had school, we didn't see the nest as regularly as before but we kept hearing from uncle very often that the pair was constantly around the nest. Then, on June 27th when I went to the house, I saw three eggs in the nest!

On July 3rd, there were still three eggs in the nest, unhatched, but I noticed that one egg was less blotched than the other two. The pair was now constantly on the nest and I assumed that the eggs would hatch very soon.

A week later on the ninth of July, when we visited the house again, we immediately went to see the nest, carefully, so as not to disturb the parents, if they were nearby, we parted the leaves covering the nest opening and saw that all three eggs had hatched. The three tiny chicks were opening their tiny beaks expectantly.

On 12th July, the first chick was seen hopping about, outside the nest. During the next two days the other two chicks too joined the first one in hopping about. In the next few days they all hopped about, perched on low branches twittered and cheeped for food and soon grew big and fat. Soon they started fluttering their tiny wings about. With mama bird's help they soon learnt to fly. Once they knew how to fly they vacated the nest and flew away.

We are hopefully looking out for another nesting in the ensuing months.

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VI - Tips On Bird Watching - 4

Compiled by: Siraj A. Taher

As Habitats Change, So Do The Birds.

Aconvenient name for a bird's immediate and typical surroundings is a 'habitat', where it can find all its food requirements, nesting sites & material, song-posts and roosting sites. Each type of habitat has it's own characteristic birds. Some species may be found in more than one habitat as they have a varied diet.

1. Before going out for birdwatching try to find out the type of habitat of the place, as this will make it easier for you to know in advance what birds to expect. eg.

a) On inland waters, jheels, marshes and lakes you can find the herons, egrets, storks, ducks, cormorants, waders and other water birds.

b) In the grasses and reedbeds there will be weavers, reedwarblers, rails, crakes while the various birds of prey like the marsh harrier etc. may be circling overhead.

c) Amongst the drier open areas, light scrub or the rocky places may be seen the larks, chats, sand-grouse, quails, partridges, drongos, shrikes and rollers, as also the kites, eagles and vultures, soaring overhead.

d) Heavily wooded areas are a haven for the flycatchers, warblers, minivets, woodpeckers and treepies, in the cultivated areas and fields you will find seed-eaters like the sparrows, weavers & munias.

e) Around the towns and city gardens there is no dearth of pigeons, doves, house crows, bulbuls, sparrows, and mynas.

2. Some of the most interesting and enjoyable places for birdwatching would be the trees of Silk-Cotton, Flame-of-the-forest, Banyan & Peepul especially at the time of flowering or fruiting. A marsh or a reedbed, especially one near a jheel or a lake could sometimes turn out to be a treasure house.

3. Nesting birds could provide important material for the study of bird behaviour, so keep out a sharp eye for nests or birds carrying nesting materials. Also keep a note of the breeding seasons of the birds likely to be nesting in your area.

4. When out birdwatching try to take sketches of birds you are likely to see (at least the migratory waders & warblers) & mark the salient points on these, especially for the difficult & confusing varieties like larks, warblers & birds of prey. This will make your task of field identification easier.

For whatever reasons you may like to watch birds, whether for pure enjoyment, for developing knowledge or out of an interest in some aspect of bird behaviour; remember that all your information may be of use in the work for conservation. Observations of amateur birdwatchers in the past have provided invaluable material to the working ornithologists & scientists. For this remember the following cardinal rules of birdwatching.

i) Be patient during your field trips

ii) Watch carefully and intelligently

iii) Observe accurately and record faithfully

iv) Do not be sentimental in either your observations or recordings.

" While many birds, like parrots, scratch in a direct fashion, others move their wings and scratch their heads by reaching the scratching foot in front of the shoulder. This is known as indirect scratching and since almost all legged reptiles scratch in this way, it is assumed that the motion in birds is a relic of their reptilian ancestry"

--Arun Bhatia in 'Nature Notes', Times of India 19th June, '83.

VII - On the Nesting of Birds And Flowering of Trees - 3.

By: Aasheesh Pittie.

Nesting Birds:-

1. TAILOR BIRD (Orthotomus sutorius):- Observed nesting between 18th June,'83 and 14th July,'83 at Banjara Hills. Nest made with a single leaf of an unidentified creeper only 6 inches above ground level. Nest lined with coconut tree strands and the down of water-reed flowers,and a few human hair. 3 eggs were laid and all of them hatched. (See note by Humayun Taher on p. 19)

2. HOUSE SWIFTS (Apus affinis):- On 25th July,'83, several birds were seen in the main hall of Nampalli (Hyderabad) railway station at 7-30 pm. Nests seen under the 'eaves' like projections at the four angles of the hall. The birds were seen on nest. Probably nesting.

3. PURPLERUMPED SUNBIRD (Nectarinia zeylonica):- Siraj Taher observed a nest suspended from a Hibiscus tree in Banjara Hills. It was almost at eye-level and in the middle of a much frequented passage-way. First seen on 16th August,'83 when there were no eggs. On 22nd August,'83 there were 3 eggs. Nestlings first observed on 2nd September,'83. They were being fed by the parents.

4. REDVENTED BULBUL (Pycnonotus cafer):- Seen nesting in a Keora bush (a cactus variety),between 20th August,'83 when only the nest was seen and 14th September,'83 when 2 nestlings were still in the nest. They were being fed by the parents. The nestlings were just developing the feathers. The eggs seen on 27-8-83 were pinkish-brown in colour with dark pink blotches and spots,(3 nos.)

5. GREY HERON (Ardea cinerea):- A small heronry of about 8-10 nests was observed by Siraj Taher in the Scouts and Guides office compound in Domalguda,(Hyd). Many fledgelings & immature birds were seen. There were 2 nestlings on the ground (1 half-eaten). Crows are reported to be harrassing the birds and eating the eggs. All the nests were on a tamarind tree an only one was on a Rain Tree(Pithecolobium saman). Observations were made on the 10th and 12th August,'83.
The nesting of Grey Herons was also observed earlier by Siraj Taher on the same tree on 23rd August,1981. The watchman there reports that this nesting activity of the birds has been going on for several years and always on the same tamarind tree.

--- Handbook, Ali & Ripley(1978);Vol:1,p.56 states as fcllows:-"Seasons various - Mainly March to June in Kashmir, July to Oct. in Northern India, Nov.-March in South India and Ceylon"-----

6. SPOTTED DOVE (Streptopelia chinensis):- A bird (probably) female was seen on 14th August,'83 sitting on a nest on a rafter in the verandah of an inhabited building.

7. COMMON MYNA (Acridotheres tristis):- Siraj Taher reports seeing a bird on 15th August,'83 carrying a cockroach into a nest in the recess between the roof and pillar at Hyderabad Airport (Begumpet). Probably the nestlings were being fed as a continuous chirping could be heard when the parent bird entered the nest. The same bird(or the other parent!) made 3-4 trips into the nest. Type of food not visible in subsequent trips.

8. SPOTTED MUNIA (Lonchura punctulata):- A pair seen carrying nesting material at Banjara Hills in the 4th week of June,'83 and again in the 4th week of August,'83. The nest could not be located. The birds were carrying the strands from water-reeds in a pond nearby and also from the blades of Lemon Grass.

9. WHITEHEADED BABBLER (Turdoides affinis):- Observed at the Nehru Zoological Park on 9-7-'83. It was carrying nesting material to a Bauhinia tree.

Flowering Trees:-

Most of the trees that were flowering in the second quarter of 1983 had stopped flowering except a few like the Gulmohar, Bougainvillea and bushes like the Ixora and Lantana. The prominent flowering trees around Hyderabad during the third quarter were:

1. The Cork Tree,(Millingtonia hortensis):- All through the rainy season the trees were in full blossom with their long-tubed fragrant white flowers which fall early.

2. Peltophorum (Peltophorum ferrugineum):- Mostly to be found in home gardens and parks, the trees were a pretty sight with their finely curled and waved yellow flowers during September.

3. Caeselpinia:- Flowering profusely in August-September. The flowers are orange with streaks of yellow.

4. Guava:- These trees were in full blossom wherever present in July-August and had started setting into fruits by September. The flowers are white with yellow centres.

5. Sitaphal or Custard-Apple (Anona squamosa):- The trees mostly grow wild especially in rocky areas. The greenish-yellow flowers, having a dusky smell were in blossom during July-August and by mid Sept. the fruits had started forming.

6. Tamarind (Tamarindus indica):- Many of these trees can still be seen along the road-sides. The trees were in blossom during Aug-Sept., with their elegant blossoms hanging in loose bunches from the sides of the branches.

7. Babool (Acacia arabica):- These trees with their ball-like tufty yellow flowers was flowering during July in and around the city. This tree can be found mostly along the roadsides and in open grounds.

N E W S:-

1. In the 3rd quarter of the year, the members of the Society went on field trips to Vanasthalipuram and Musi river (10.7.83), Indira Park(7.8.83), and the Nehru Zoological Park(4.9.83).

2. Two indoor meetings were held on 22.8.83 and 12.9.83 at the Forest Dept. Office. Excellent wildlife films were screened,(courtesy; A.P. Forest Dept.)- The films that were screened were,(a) What is a bird?,(b) White Wilderness, (c) Secrets of Plant World, (d) Elephants and Hippos in Africa and (e) African Lion in his realm.

3. One of our member, N. Shiv Kumar is contributing a reg- feature column titled 'NATURE NOTES' to the Indian Express, Hyd. Though not always on birds, they are nevertheless educational and very interesting. So keep a look-out for Shiv's column in the Monday issue of the 'Indian Express', Hyderabad edition

4. The Society is contemplating a project for an 'in-depth' study and evaluation of various types of bird habitats in and around the city. This could be both interesting as well as a very useful work when completed. For further details contact the Hon. Secretary.

5. Mr. K. Vidyasagar, D.F.O.(WLM), Tirupati, (and also a member of the Society) reports having sighted nearly 500-600 Pelicans and 3-4 thousands Greater Flamingoes on 22nd September,'83 at Pulicat Lake, Nellore Dist., A.P.($13^{o}40'N$, $80^{o}10'E$) and again on 29th Sept,'83. Most of the Pelicans seen were juveniles. Some of the other birds seen were the Painted Storks, Spotted Sandpipers and Whiskered Terns.

6. The Great Indian Bustard, which once roamed majestically in Rajasthan, Gujerat and M.P. in large numbers is now on the list of almost extinct birds according to official sources. When the bird was sighted some 3 years back, in Karera, M.P., the Govt. promptly set up sanctuary for its protection. But the bird has not grown in number as the female lays only one egg annually. The bustard is a shy bird flying off at the slightest sound. It feeds mainly on insects, lizards, grasshoppers, grains, shoots of crops and beetles etc. The size of the egg is almost the size of a duck's egg and hatches in 21 days. The cursorial birds, with their long legs, sturdy feet and strong toes inhabit open country. The bustard is about the size of a peafowl.

-----"INDIAN EXPRESS", 8-10-'83

(See the article on the sighting of the Great Indian Bustard in A.P. on page 2 of this issue.--Ed.)

7. Millions of finches migrating south from Siberia and Scandinavia are sowing panic here(Stuttgart, West Germany) with residents vividly reminded of Alfred Hitchcock's horror movie,"The Birds". Mountain finches migrate here each year to feed on local beech trees but none in the town recalls seeing so many of the birds at one time. ----INDIAN EXPRESS, 4-1-'83.

C O M M E N T:-

" I feel that so far as your State(A.P.) is concerned, it cannot find a better State Bird than the Grey (Spot-billed) Pelican. This bird is now known to breed regularly in significant numbers only at one or two places in Andhra Pradesh. A.P. had the largest known pelicanry in India, but the indifference of the authorities concerned allowed it to go out of existence. The naming of this bird as the State Bird may draw the attention of the people and the officials to it's plight and may even bring to light some breeding places which remain unknown.

Mr. Jagannatha Rao's piece on the Flamingo in MAYURA,(Vol.4, No.2) reminded of a place where, in 1960 or so, I saw many hundreds of flamingoes. This was a creek known as Guyyeru on the coast of Krishna District. In those days it was a wonderful place for ducks and waders etc. Although not as extensive as the old Kolleru, Lake Pulicat or the Point Calimere swamps, it is a place where a bird sanctuary can be easily established. May I request you to take it up? "

Kerala Natural History Society
25/825, Kumaramangalam
Thampanoor,
TRIVANDRUM - 695 001.

--K. K. NEELAKANTAN---

(Prof. K.K. Neelakantan's letter is in response to the request made in the Mayura, (Vol.4, No.2) inviting suggestions from readers for recommending to the Government of A.P. for the selection of a State Bird)
---Editor.

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Edited for the Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh by Aasheesh Pittie.

1. Purple Sunbird
2. Common Wood Shrike.
3 Jungle Babblers

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MAYURA

Newsletter of the Bird Watchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh

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SURVEY OF THE BIRDS OF ANDHRA PRADESH - 11.

By:- Pushp Kumar, I.F.S.

FALCONS:-

These handsome diurnal birds of prey with long pointed wings and swift flight are associated with the art (and science) of Falconry. In days past, the rulers (Moghuls, etc.) were fond of this sport. Today it is best exemplified by the rulers from the Gulf countries. The art perhaps has died out in India. Now India is perhaps the main supplier of some of these birds to the Gulf, where they are believed to fetch fabulous prices. The birds are on Schedule-I of the Wildlife Act, ie., fully protected, yet some birds ~~are~~ apparently find their way out. One wonders whether this could be one of the reasons for the endangered status of these birds. Others being the increasing use of pesticides and loss of nesting sites for resident species and roosting places for the migrants.

Of the 13 species of Falcons reported from the sub-continent, 7 are reported from Andhra Pradesh.

LAGGAR Falco biarmicus jugger J.E. Gray.

Telugu: Lagudu.
Urdu: Laggar (male); Jhaggar (female).

This large handsome falcon is perhaps better known to local falconers than the Peregrine in our parts, and was popular with some of the sporting zamindars and jagirdars in the past. There are none left to indulge in this art now. One speciman (a Jhaggar?) caught arougd Hyderabad and brought to Nehru Zoological Park (N.Z.P.) in the late 60s could be trained by a local falconer to fly and return to his hand on call. The status of this falcon in the state is not well known.

PEREGRINE FALCON Falco peregrinus japonensis Gmelin.

Telugu: Bhyri dega.
Urdu: Bhyri.

This migrant and beautiful falcon is not clearly differentiated in the field from the Shaheen. A Peregrine Falcon, which is greyer and more finely barred below, was observed on the foreshore of Pakhal Lake, swooping from the skies onto a low-flying Common Crow and bringing it down to the ground in a breathtaking swoop. The crow once on the ground turned on its

back and fought off the falcon with beak and claw and escaped. The falcon swiftly recovered and in the same amazing sweep struck at a Little Egret on the shore, missed as the Egret ducked, swept up onto a Baringtonia and sat there nonchalantly preening its feathers. All this in the same swift movement.

SHAHEEN FALCON Falco peregrinus peregrinator Sundevall.

Telugu: Bhyri.
Urdu; Shaheen.

A very handsome bird. Status in the state not clearly understood. One speciman (male?) caught in the outskirts of Hyderabad was brought to the NZ.P. Often the favourite of sportsmen and now lately, the Sheikhs. Hence highly endangered.

HOBBY Falco subbuteo ?

Telugu: ? .
Urdu: Morassani.

This smaller version of the Shaheen can be easily confused with it in the field. The status of this falcon is not well established in the state.

REDHEADED MERLIN Falco chicquera chiquera Daudin.

Telugu: Jelgedda, Turumchi.
Urdu: Turumti.

This beautiful falcon is a migrant to Andhra Pradesh, though it breeds within subcontinental limits. Seen patchily throughout the state. The male is distinct however the female could be confused with other falcons. Number of these falcon (usually male?) have been kept in the N.Z.P. since early sixties. The birds were caught in snares in the vicinity as they tried to swoop on decoy pigeons.

The Merlin (Falco columbarius) has been sight-reported twice near Sangareddy surrounds, about 60 kms. north of Hyderabad. However in view of the entry in the Handbook this requires further specific confirmation.

REDLEGGED FALCON Falco vespertinus amurensis Radde.

Telugu: ?
Urdu: ?

A passage migrant, this small falcon has been recorded from Nellore and Rajahmundry as per the Handbook.

LESSER KESTREL Falco naumanni Fleischer.

Telugu: ?
Urdu: ?

Passage migrant. Recorded from Rajahmundry and recently Vishakhapatnam where a pair were observed over scrub-covered hills outside Vishakhapatnam town.

EUROPEAN KESTREL Falco tinnunculus tinnunculus Linnaeus.

Telugu: Thondala muchi gedda, Thondala doshi gadu.
Urdu: ?

A migrant. Most Kestrels that are seen around Hyderabad during winter months when they make their appearance hovering characteristically in the air, belong to this migrant race. The Kestrel is seen throughout the State. A male hovering over Bustard country in Kurnool District was identified as "Thondala doshi gadu" by a local trapper. It is not known how this local name came aboue. Its food appears to be rats and mice more than lizards. Kestrels are usually seen over open scrub or grassland like Vanasthali.

INDIAN KESTREL Falco tinnunculus objurgatus (Baker).

Telugu: As above.
Urdu: ?

The Handbook lists this as found in portions of Eastern Ghats "Breeding". No reports of actual nest sighting are received. However the Kestrel was observed a number of times in Chintapalli and the surrounding Eastern Ghats areas. Presumably these birds belong to this sub-species, though it is difficult to distinguish in the field.

LEAD SHOT POSES THREAT FOR EAGLES:- Two to three million ducks and geese die each year after swallowing spent lead shotgun pellets and now there is evidence that lead poisoning also poses hazards to Bald Eagles. In one study between 1967-1982 it was found that 7% of 650 Bald Eagles had lead poisoning. The probable source of the toxic metal-lead pellets carried by dead or crippled waterfowl. When eagles feed on the carcasses of duck and geese that have swallowed or been hit with lead shot, they ingest the lead shot along with the meat. Moreover concentrations of waterfowl, which attract hunters also attract large numbers of Bald Eagles in fall and spring. That makes the raptors susceptible to lead poisoning from a readily available food source.
- National Wildlife, June/July 83.

RECORDING OF FIRST AND LAST SIGHTINGS OF ANNUAL MIGRANTS IN AND AROUND HYDERABAD, WITH NOTES ON GENERAL DISTRIBUTION.

By:- Aasheesh Pittie, 14-7-370 Begum Bazar, Hyderabad-12.

Continued from page 8 of Vol. 4 No. 3;

II Accipitridae:-

1. BLACKEARED or LARGE INDIAN KITE Milvus migrans lineatus (Gray).

Breeding extralimitally in the northern Palaearctic regions, this bird also breeds in north Kashmir, Ladhak and perhaps throughout the Himalayas. Migrates in "small numbers" to west Pakistan, northern and Peninsular India to approximately Lat. 18° N. Migration through Bhutan has been recorded on 5th September (Ali & Ripley 1978).

First Date: 9th November. Place: Shamshabad.
Last Date: 13th February. Place: Shamirpet.

2. PALE HARRIER Circus macrourus (S.G. Gmelin).

After breeding in the Central Palaearctic region, the Pale Harrier spreads into Africa and the Indian Subcontinent. Wintering in India from August-September to March-April, most are gone by end April.

First Date: 9th November. Place: Shamshabad.
Last Date: 13th February. Place: Shamirpet.

3. MONTAGU'S HARRIER Circus pygargus (Linnaeus).

In the Hyderabad region, this Harrier is seen more often than the Pale Harrier. It breeds in the western and central parts of the Palaearctic region and has an almost identical migratory pattern to that of the Pale Harrier.

First Date: 7th November. Place: Palmakol.
Last Date: 20th February. Place: Mahavir Harin Vanasthali.

4. MARSH HARRIER Circus aeruginosus aeruginosus (Linnaeus).

Undoubtedly the commonest Harrier of the Hyderabad region in winter. It breeds in the Palaearctic zone and spreads south to the Ethiopian and Oriental realms while wintering. Arrives to the subcontinent in September and departs about April.

First Date: 24th October. Place: Nehru Zoological Park.
Last Date: 28th March. Place: Osman Sagar.

III Falconidae:-

1. KESTREL Falco tinnunculus tinnunculus Linnaeus.

Breeds throughout the Palaearctic Region, wintering to the south of the same. It is in India between September and April. Common in the Hyderabad region.

First Date: 5th October. Place: Chilkur.
Last Date: 27th March. Place: Himayat Sagar.

IV Charadridae; Scolopacinae:-

1. BLACKTAILED GODWIT Limosa limosa limosa (Linnaeus).

This is a Palaearctic bird, migrating south of such regions in winter, along with the Bartailed Godwit (L. l. melanuroides). While the former has a distribution throughout the subcontinent, (though rare in S India and Sri Lanka), the latter is found only in the eastern parts of the country - both subspecies intermixing in Orissa. Birds begin to come into the continent as early as end August and are well distributed over their range by early December. Though there are records of birds staying over till July (in breeding plumage and fattened with food reserves), most have left by end April. Around Hyderabad these birds are seen in ones and twos only.

First Date: 29th December. Place: Manjira (Odancheru).
Last Date: 6th February. Place: Manjira.

2. COMMON REDSHANK Tringa totanus totanus (Linnaeus).

Breeds in the Palaearctic realm, right through C and E Asia. In the subcontinent it breeds in Kashmir and Ladhak. In winter, the number of Himalayan migrants is greatly enhanced by the influx of Palaearctic birds. They spread throughout the subcontinent by August-September. Spring migration begins in March and by May all have left. Around Hyderabad they are seen occassionally.

First Date: 31st October. Place: Patancheru.
Last Date: 30th January. Place: Patancheru.

3. MARSH SANDPIPER Tringa stagnatilis (Bechstein).

This delicate copy of the Greenshank arrives to the subcontinent in smaller numbers than the other species of sandpipers, by mid August, after breeding in regions of SE Europe and C Asia. The return migrations end by early May. Seen in 3s and 4s around Hyderabad, occassionally. One bird ringed at Point Calimere on 12-11-1962 was recovered in Russia, at a straight-line map

distance of c. 5100 kms. on 4-5-1963 (Handbook).

First Date: 23rd January. Place: Patancheru.
Last Date: 28th March. Place: Osman Sagar.

4. GREENSHANK Tringa nebularia (Gunnerus).

A breeder of the Palaearctic regions, this bird migrates south of the same and spreads all over the Indian subcontinent. Arrives by the second half of August and mostly gone by begining of May. Some non-breders stay behind. Seen more often than the Redshank or the Marsh Sandpiper around Hyderabad.

First Date: 7th November. Place: Pulicat.
Last Date: 1st May. Place: Himayat Sagar.

5. GREEN SANDPIPER Tringa ochropus Linnaeus.

Breeds across the vast expanses of the Palaearctic and winters south of these regions and also in the British Isles. Disperses throughout the subcontinent. Common around Hyderabad. A ringed recovery had covered a straight-line map distance of 5600 kms! (Handbook).

First Date: 30th January. Place: Patancheru.
Last Date: 27th March. Place: Himayat Sagar.

6. WOOD or SPOTTED SANDPIPER Tringa glareola Linnaeus.

Another Palaearctic breeder, wintering south of these realms. Found throughout the Indian subcontinent. Inward migration begins by August and most birds gone by mid May. Has a few good ring-recoveries on record. Most of the Indian birds being recovered in NE Siberia at general straight-line map distances of 4500 kms to 5200 kms. One bird ringed near Calcutta on 6-4-1967 was recovered 48 days later on 24-5-1967 in Russia - at a straight-line map distance of 6200 kms! (Handbook).

First Date: 10th October. Place: Nehru Zoological Park.
Last Date: 1st May. Place: Himayat Sagar.

7. COMMON SANDPIPER Tringa hypoleucos Linnaeus.

Has a very wid spreadbreeding range in the Palaearctic realm. In the Indian subcontinent, is known to breed in Kashmir, Ladhak and Garhwal. Winters equally widely in areas south of the Palaearctic. Very little overland-migration data available - possibly comes in along the coast (Handbook). Arrives by August and disperses all over the subcontinent, aggravating the flocks of Himalayan-breeding migrants. Departs relatively late by mid May. Seen often around Hyderabad.

First Date: 18th October. ~~Last Dat~~ Place: Nehru Zoological Park
Last Date: 8th May. Place: Shamirpet.

8. COMMON SNIPE Gallinago gallinago gallinago (Linnaeus).

Has a widespread breeding range in the Palaearctic. Also breeds in EAfrica and is resident in the Himalayas. Winters in southern parts of breeding range. Widespread in the subcontinent, but numbers diminishing in S India. (Where the Pintail Snipe is commoner). Most birds arrive by end August and a majority have left by end April. Seen often inound Hyderabad.

First Date: 20th September. Place: Mahavir Harin Vanasthali.
Last Date: 14th March. Place: Rajendranagar.

9. LITTLE STINT Calidris minutus (Leisler).

Breeds in the extreme north of the Palaearctic realm, in the arctic tundra and winters in Africa and east of the Caspian Sea to the subcontinent. Seen throughout the winter in the Hyderabad region - though the Handbook states that it is seen inland while on its way to the more preferable coastal areas. Common around Hyderabad in the winter.

First Date: 7th November. Place: Palmakol.
Last Date: 8th May. Place: Shamirpet.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:- I thank Capt. N.S. Tyabji flr his valuable suggestions and advice and constant encouragement.

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BIRDWATCHING TRIP TO PATANCHERU:

By:- Humayun S. Taher, 6-3-249/3, Rd. No. 1, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-34. Age; 13 yrs.

On a fine Sunday morning, the 27th of November 1983, a few members of the BSAP went on a field trip to Patancheru - ICRISAT compus. I was one of them.

We reached the place at about 6 am. It was a chilly morning

and one of the first sights we saw was the early morning mist. It covered the ground in a foot high layer. Later the mist disappeared when the first rays of the sun touched the ground.

The early morning was ideal for birdwatching, and we saw quite a few birds including some uncommon ones. A few of these were the Marsh Harrier and Montagu's Harrier. A Pale Harrier was also seen. Amongst the other birds of prey were the Pariah Kite and Blackwinged Kite. A Blackeared Kite was also seen. The eagles seen were the White-eyed Buzzard Eagle and both Lesser Spotted and Greater Spotted Eagles. A Kestrel and a Shikra were also seen.

The waders were mainly sandpipers and stints as well as lapwings. The sandpipers were the Common Sandpiper, Spotted or Wood Sandpiper. Later the Green Sandpiper and a large flock of some unidentified sandpipers was seen. The Little Stints were plentiful and both species of lapwings, namely, the Redwattled and Yellowwattled Lapwings were seen; besides the Redshank and Greenshank. A Grey Partridge was heard.

As we went further we saw plenty of Grey Herons flying about. A few Blue Rock Pigeons were seen flying. There were also plenty of larks like the Rufoustailed Finch Lark and Short-toed Lark. Amongst the chats there were the Pied Bushchat, the Stone Chat and the Collared Bush Chat. Of the Shrikes, there were only a few, the Rufousbacked and the Brown Shrike.

There were plenty of water birds like the Purple Moorhen and the Whitebreasted Waterhen. Amongst ducks, Spotbills, the Gadwal and Cotton Teal and the Nukta and some Brahminy ducks were seen. There were also some Bronzewinged Jacana, Pheasanttailed Jacana and Grebes or Dabchick. Near this spot we saw a solitary Purple Heron and noticed a lot of Coots. The two Kingfishers seen were the Whitebreasted Kingfisher and the Pied Kingfisher. In the reeds we saw the Reed Warbler and later a streaked Fantail Warbler. A few minutes later a Whitebacked Munia flew past. Whitebreasted

A Green Bee Eater was seen on the fence bordering a lake. Nearby was another bee eater which was identified as a Bluetailed Bee Eater. One of the terrestrial birds we saw was the Indian Pipit.

The other birds we saw were the (female) Koel, a female Blue throat, Ring Dove and a solitary Brownheaded Gull. An Indian Wren-Warbler, a Grey Wagtail and a White Wagtail were seen. Among other warblers were the Chiffchaff and Lesser Whitethroat were seen. The two Babblers werethe Large Grey and the Whiteheaded Babbler. There were many other birds which I omit because they were what are commonly seen everyday.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES:-

I - New Home For Great Indian Bustards In Andhra Pradesh.

By:- K. Jaganmohan Rao, I.F.S., Field Director, Project Tiger, Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve.

After continuous search for locating new habitats for Great Indian Bustards in Andhra Pradesh, the wildlife wing of the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department detected a new home for these endangered birds in Kurnool District. About eight of these birds are now found moving in the black cotton drylands (Regur) at Vallampadu, Kaifa, Venkatapuram, Pandilapuram and Nandavanam villages about 6 kms. from Banganapalli. On 9th December 1983, Sri Varaprasad, F.R.O., and the author sighted one of the birds of this locality. These birds are found foraging on Red Gram, Cotton, Coriander, Kusum (Karad) and Jowar from the fields around these villages.

In Rollapadu village of Nandikotkur Taluq, where these birds were first located in Andhra Pradesh, they have now multiplied with the intensive protection given by the Forest Department. This year four chicks have been added to the existing population of eleven birds taking total number of Bustards in Rollapadu village to fifteen. The villagers of Rollapadu have cooperated with wildlife staff in protecting these birds. Thus the efforts of the Forest Department in bringing this threatened sird to a survival level have succeeded greatly.

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II - Why, Oh Why, Little Egrets ?

By:- Rajeev Mathew, 6-3-912/1, Kapadia Lane, Somajiguda, Hyderabad - 500 482.

Observation at Medak.

It was a promising morning and the skies were clear. We walked a kilometer and came to a lake which had water at its centre. Our reason to come to this place was fishing. This lake is quite big, known as "Go Samudram" or "Gosem Cheruvu". But, it had dried and left little water, and plenty of fish. This is what attracted us as much as it did the birds. As we fished we saw a few Pied Kingfishers fishing, plunging and rising in a shower of diamonds withffish in their beaks.

What supprised us were the Egrets who were flying inove the water level, plunging their long neck once in a while into

the water and rising with a fish. Every four out of five jabs resulted in success. Normally, they should fish at the waters' edge and not while flying above whe water. There were about four Egrets fishing in this unusual fashion. One caught a very large fish and unable to hold it dropped it back into the water.

I hope to get an answer to this aberrant behaviour of the Egrets from my more seasnned birdwatcher friends.

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III - Feeding Behaviour Of Cattle Egrets.

By:- P. Balu, H. No. 26, Opp. Bus Depot, Mehdipatnam, Hyderabad - 500 028.

On 25th October, 1983, between 7.15 amm. and 8.45 a.m., I was on my first trip to a marsh for the Habitat Survey Project. There I had seen Cattle Egrets feeding With the departure of the cattle, they were disarranged and after a few minutes settled down to a definite pattern of feeding. The leading egret in the group fell back, allowed the others to pass it and started eating the insects that were disturbed in the wake of other egrets. Another two followed suit, repeating the first egrets' example. This was noticed by me and followed upon for a week. Then the place was filled up and housing construction started.

The egrets have shifted to another small marshy patch which I discovered later. Even here they do the szme as they did earlier. Is it only three birds or all the birds who do it ? It is to be seen if it is a developed observation on the part of a few birds or all.

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IV - Wait's Worth.

By:- Rajeev Mathew, 6-3-912/1 Kapadia Lane, Somajiguda, Hyderabad - 500 482.

Every day, 9.15 a.m. finds me at a makeshift bus stop over-looking a patch of paddy fields extending upto the Hussain Sagar. I pass my time there watching birds and an occassional mongoose till the bus arrives. Apart from sunbirds, wagtails, egrets, pond herons and mynahs, a common sandpiper or two puts in an appearance, immitating the wagtail and shaking his whole abdomen.

This day, 22-11-1983, was such a day or at least I thought so, on seeing Old Mongoose I felt I could confirm it, but no. Today he meant business. He crept, taking all cover and advanced towards a pond heron having a field day at the open water

course and simply oblivious to his surroundings. The Mongoose sneaked upto the pond heron and grabbed him by his leg.

Suddenly all hell broke loose, in a ruffle of fur and feather, croaks and screeches, a fight unto death! The Mongoose lappt for the throat of the pond heron and the bite there decided that Mongoose was the victor. The spoils of the battle being the limp body of the pond heron.

All this took time, the bus having come and gone, leaving me high and dry on the road. My watch told me that I was really late for my first class. Well, I was not any poorer for a class missed, for I got my wait's worth.

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V - Aggressive Behaviour of the Indian Moorhen (Gallinula chloropus).

By:- Aasheesh Pittie, 14-7-370 Begum Bazar, Hyderabad-12.

On the 30th of October, 1983, some fellow birdwatchers and I observed 2 pairs of Indian Moorhen (Gallinula chloropus) behaving rather aggressively towards each other. The arena was a pond inside the Nehru Zoological Park - two-thirds of which was overgrown with typha and the remaining area was open water. We were watching these Moorhen, when all of a sudden,

"Two birds face each other and jump a little out of the water, lean back and strike out with their tarsii! The toes seem to get entangled and they remain in this position, calling shrilly (like dabchick), occassionally. A third bird is rushing to the scene, when a fourth sees the 'game' and comes too. Two pairs form immediately. The original two are still grappling, while the latter demonstrate to each other differently. They bend low in the water, beaks almost touching the surface (a lower profile than when they are feeding) - rear ends raised. The wings are half spread out and the outer-tail coverts, white in colour, fanned. They chase each other in circles, like this. Once, they rise and surface-flap for a short distance (like coots), paddling on the water. Later, the first two birds separate and each joins one of the latter two. Both pairs swim away in opposite directions, again calling like dabchick. The whole affair lasts for about 3 - 5 minutes. "

That the aggressive behaviour had a territorial motive cannot be doubted: from the fact that both pairs swam away, in opposite directions, from the spot where they had fought and displayed, thus establishing that point as a dividing boundary. This

territorial display could have been either for a breeding or a feeding area. However, it should be bourne in mind that the breeding season of these birds in and around Hyderabad, is during the monsoon. By the end of October, the monsoons are getting over, and so there are lesser chances that the motive of this aggression was the establishing of a breeding territory. Anyway, I had seen one of the pairs, constructing a nest during the monsoon, in this pond. There are more chances that the display was to demarcate the boundary of a feeding area.

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VI - Habitat Survey Project of BSAP.

By:- Binod C. Choudhury, C/o Nehru Zoological Park, Hyd.

In the four years since 1980, the Birdwatcher's Society of Andhra Pradesh (BSAP) has been systematically making checklists of birds (and other flora and fauna) found in and around the 50 km radius of Hyderabad city. Outstation members file their observations to the secretary of the Society, who is responsible for making a state-wide checklist. These observations also find place in the BSAP publication MAYURA - a quarterly newsletter. The nerve centre of the Society being Hyderabad, members get an opportunity to visit various habitats surrounding the city, at least once a month on a field-outing in transport very generously provided by the wildlife wing of the A.P. Forest Dept. Such observations had helped BSAP to record any/all changes that have taken place in these habitats from the point of view of both flora and fauna.

In July 1983, an idea was mooted by the members to classify all habitats around the city and to carry out a survey to record their present/changing conditions. Birds were chosen to be the indicators of the health of the habitat. Members of the BSAP agreed to volunteer and record observations in each habitat at regular intervals of two weeks and to compile data on fauna and flora, physiography, activities of biotic elements and factors effecting change. Volunteers with a good idea of each area they chose were also assisted by other less experienced members. That is how BSAP's Habitat Survey Project (HSP) was born.

Volunteers wanted to carry out a years' prelimnary observation and on the basis of these observations (which they report in regular field-trips of BSAP), to devise a common data recording proforma so that a standard methodology of information gathering system is evolved.

Each habitat survey group is to report to the HSP coordinator

a quarterly report covering periods July-Sept, Oct-Dec, Jan-Mar and Apr-Jun. On the basis of these reports and the opinions of the members during monthly field-trips the secretary is authorised to address letters to concerned authorities regarding any disturbance factors that can be removed from an habitat. Members also use the daily newspaper column to draw the attention of the authorities to such matters. The BSAP is working as the watchdog of the Hyderabad Habitat.

A total of 9 habitat types have been taken in the HSP. A list of them and names of volunteers who work on them is given below.

Habitat Types:	Volunteers:
1. Rocky Areas (Banjara Hills)	Mr Siraj Taher & Humayun Taher.
2. Grass Lands (Mahavir Harin Vanasthali)	Mr Aasheesh Pittie.
3. Marshy Lands (Low-lying areas)	Mr Balakoteshwar Rao.
4. Lakes (Hussain Sagar)	Mr Srikanth.
5. Built-up Area (near Charminar)	Mr Mohd. Ali Khan.
6. Farmland (APAU, Rajendranagar)	Ms Amrutalaxmi & Sridevi. Mr Srinivas Rao & Sudhir Reddy.
7. Built-up Established Formal Garden (Public Gardens)	Mr Rajeev Mathew.
8. New Formal Garden, being laid (Indira Park)	Mr Kashinath.
9. Built-up Wilderness (Nehru Zoological Park)	Mr B C Choudhury.

Project Coordinator - Binod C. Choudhury.
Project Advisor - Mr Pushp Kumar.

NEWS:-

1. During the fourth quarter of 1983 the members went on field trips to Chilkur (9/10), Inkriyal (23/10), Narsapur (16/11), Manthagiri (20/11), Pahadi Shareef (4/12) and to Manjira Reservoir (18/12). Beside these, 3 indoor meetings were held where excellent films on birds and wildlife were screened. On 14/11 Capt. N S TYabji, Hon. Rep. of WWF-India addressed the members on "Habitats and their relationships to birds". It was a very useful and interesting talk.

Mr C R Rao, Sr. Aerodrome Officer, addressed the members on 12/12, the subject of his talk being Bird Hits to Aircraft. A great deal of information on the subject was given by Mr Rao and he also elaborated on the methods being employed to counter this problem.

2. Dr A R Rahamani of the BNHS, who is working on the ecology of the Great Indian Bustard, was a guest of honour at the Society's field-trip to Manjira. In an informal discussion after birding that day, he spoke of his work on the GIB in Maharashtra and also cleared many of the members' doubts.

3. The year (1983) has ended and it is indeed gratifying to note that from a strength of 31 members in January, the membership has now risen to 84. This has been possible only due to the keen interest shown by the members in spreading the message of the Society - which in turn has brought in voluntarily several new members. The attendance at both the field-trips and the indoor meetings is very encouraging.

COMMENT:-

I - " I was pleased to learn from Sri K Jaganmohan Rao's article that the Great Indian Bustard is multiplying in A.P. But the Lesser Florikan's name is given as 'Nemalinare'. This is the name of a tree and Nela Nemali is the name of a bird since this name means in Telugu 'Ground Peafowl'.

Some days ago I heard the fluttering of a bird in a bush in the Public Garden. On going round the bush I saw a Green Pigeon (Crocopus phoenicopterus)+ with its wings out-spread. Before I could catch it, it flew out of the bush and began to go over the artificial pond. Half way across it flopped into the water, apparently exhausted. When it left the bush, a hawk (probably a Shikra) flew parallel to it from a nearby tree but did not attempt to catch it. I asked a boatman to bring me the bird, which he did. I brought the bird home and forced a little plantain pulp and later some milk and bread into its beak. This it swallowed, and the next day, having rested in a cage, showed signs of restlessness. I released it in the Public Garden and it flew strongly and almost vertically into a tall tree.

In MAYURA (4:2) in the last paragraph of 'The Tailor Bird's Nest' I wrote that I had never seen or heard of a nest falling due to the shedding of the leaves of the tree. Last summer a Tailor Bird built a nest using a single leaf of our Wild Almond Tree at a height of about 15 - 20 ft. When the tree began to shed its leaves, the nest became a casuality."

- O. C. Edwards.

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+ Editor's Note: Now, Treron phoenicoptera.

I - " You may be glad to know that in Bangalore we have an Amateur Birdwatchers Club, C/o S Subramanya, Dept. of Entomology, Univ. of Agri. Sciences, Bangalore 560024.

I may state that we have undertaken some projects and recommend them to you,

1. Checklists of birds of localities,
2. Relative abundance of rare species,
3. How to increase birds in a garden, and
4. Methdds to induced nesting by artificial nests.

Some suggestions;
1. Editor should make articles more effective.
2. Line drawings should be included.
3. Changes in habitat in relation to bird life in a tabular form would have been more effective.
4. Notes should be more brief and cohesive. "

- A. K. Chakravarthy.

III - " I think we should adopt Grey Pelican as State Bird.

Spotbills arebbeing sold in plenty in Bapatla market @ Rs 4/- eahh.

- Dr S Tej Kumar.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our serial on The Nesting of Birds and Flowering of Trees, will appear in the next issue.

For contributing articles to MAYURA, please address:
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